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swissair Gazette

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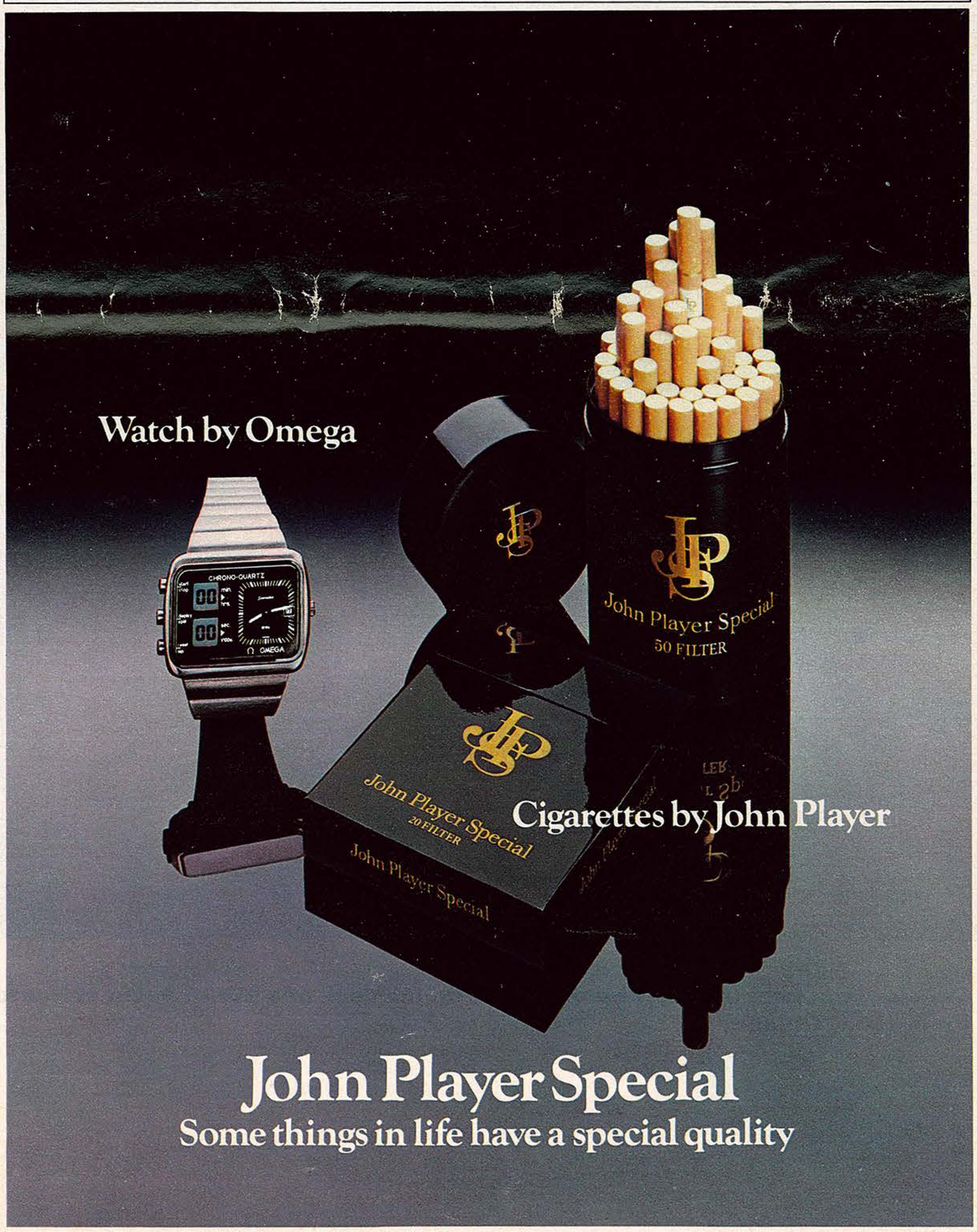
There is no lack of ready-made opinions about the Irish, some with more and some with less foundation in fact. The truth is that the Emerald Isle is rich in individualists, likable and unconventional characters with a charm that is all their own.

Über den Iren kursiert manche Klischeevorstellung, zu Recht und zu Unrecht. Zutreffend ist, dass man auf der Grünen Insel überraschend vielen Individualisten begegnet, Menschen mit unverkennbar eigenem Habitus, sympathisch unkonventionell.

A propos des Irlandais, les clichés ne manquent pas, à tort ou à raison. Mais on a raison quand on prétend que, sur l'île Emeraude, on rencontre un nombre étonnant d'individualités à forte personnalité, sympathiques et non conformistes.

Photographer: Walter Baumann, Zurich

Ireland is a green country. Green is the hue of the pastures revealed when the veil of cloud is torn apart far below the plane and Ireland lies there, glinting like an emerald in the silver setting of her sea. To the visitor from the continent of Europe, the green isle belongs to a different creation. Where else can we find tree ferns on the beaches, and only 200 metres higher a moorland prospect where heather and gorse vie with each other in purple and yellow all through the year? Where else should we look for a karst landscape in whose fissures gentians and other Alpine flowers are swept by the salt spray of the breakers? No wonder the inhabitants of this green isle bear the mark of its inimitable nature. The irrational character of the Irish, their mixture of romantic fancy and sober realism, of scepticism and passion, has made them unique, people who delight us with their humour and their human warmth. One of the great charms of their country is its quiet countryside picked out with ruins from prehistoric and early Christian times. It took a long time for the island to resume the contacts with the outside world that it had in those far-off days, but it has now opened its doors to industry, trade and tourism.



Omega Seamaster Quartz. Photographed on the deck of a SWAN yacht at Nautor shipbuilders in Pietarsaari, Finland.

Left: Omega Seamaster Quartz. DD 396 0875. Stainless steel and 14 ct. gold. Sapphire crystal. Water-resistant up to 60 meters. Right: Omega Seamaster Quartz. ST 396 0873. Stainless steel. Sapphire crystal. Water-resistant up to 60 meters. Both models registered.

Your American Express Card guide to dining in Italy.

In Italy you're very conscious of the grandeur of the past. It's still a great artistic nation, though today the spirit is expressed not only in the fine arts, but in interior design, fabrics, knitwear – and, not least, in the culinary arts.

Traditional regional recipes, interpreted with inimitable Italian flair, produce dishes that are unique. Here are some of the restaurants where you will find a welcome, both for you and the American Express Card.

Rome

Sans Souci
One of Rome's most stylish and elegant restaurants. The food is mainly Italian, with some exotic dishes. Try the Koblenska, prawns flambées and poisson au whisky. No less than 300 Italian wines are available. Via Sicilia 20. Tel: (06) 489388.

Ranieri
Famous for its Mignonette à la Regine Victoire, and it has an unquestionable right to this dish, as Giuseppe Ranieri, the founder, was Queen Victoria's favourite chef. The interior is exquisite, with chandeliers and early Victorian mirrors. Via Mario dei Fiori 26. Tel: (06) 6791592.

Florence

Harry's Bar
Famous meeting place of the international jet set. Superbly cooked meat and fish dishes, Chianti from the owner's vineyard, Tuscan wines and champagne. Elegant, informal surroundings. Lungarno Vespucci 22r. Tel: (055) 296700.

Milan

Giannino *(above)*
Milan's business tycoons favour the extreme elegance of this Tuscan restaurant, founded in the 1800s. There's an immense, historic kitchen which produces delicacies like wild duck in kirsch and swordfish with mussels. Complemented by vintage wines. Via Amatore Sciesa 8.
Tel: (02) 5452948/5452765.

Savini
Setting of 19th century elegance, which attracts people of good taste – both regulars and tourists. Milanese regional cookery such as osso buco, turkey breast Savini and risotto alla Milanese. Galleria Vittorio Emanuele. Tel: (02) 898343.

Turin

Del Cambio
This restaurant already existed in the great days of the Risorgimento, and there's a tradition that Cavour dined here. The main dishes are Piedmontese. The wine cellar has 20,000 bottles and care is taken to match the right bottle with the right dish. Piazza Carignano, 2. Tel: (011) 546690.

Palermo

Charleston
A beautiful terrace on which to enjoy the beautiful climate, and the delicious regional food – fresh pasta, pappardelle aila monreale, swordfish rolls, veal cutlet with sherry. Piazzale Ungheria 30.
Tel: (091) 321366.

Naples

La Fenestrella
A typical Neapolitan restaurant with a friendly, relaxed atmosphere. It has both local and international clientele. Their speciality is seafood. There is a wide selection of regional wines. Borgo Marechiaro. Tel: (081) 7690020.

Zi Teresa *(below)*
Naples is the place for seafood, and here – at this restaurant on the waterfront, you'll find it at its best, together with the pick of the regional wines. Borgo Marinaro 7. Tel: (081) 416420.

Venice

Harry's Bar
Here you can enjoy one of the most beautiful views of the world: St. Mark's and the Grand Canal. And while you enjoy the view, you can enjoy the food – excellent Venetian fish specialities, plus heady north Italian wines, like Tocai and Merlot. San Marco Calle Vallaresso. Tel: (041) 85331.

Antico Martini *(below)*
Has a long and romantic history as an artist's cafe, and tradition shows in the chef's sure touch with seafood, such as sole fillet Martini and elaborate pasta dishes like Cannellone Dogaressa. The décor is charming rococo. Campo San Fantis 1983.
Tel: (041) 24121.

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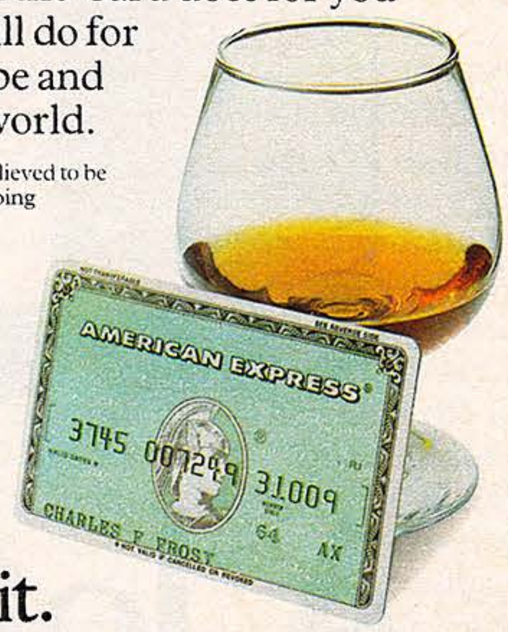

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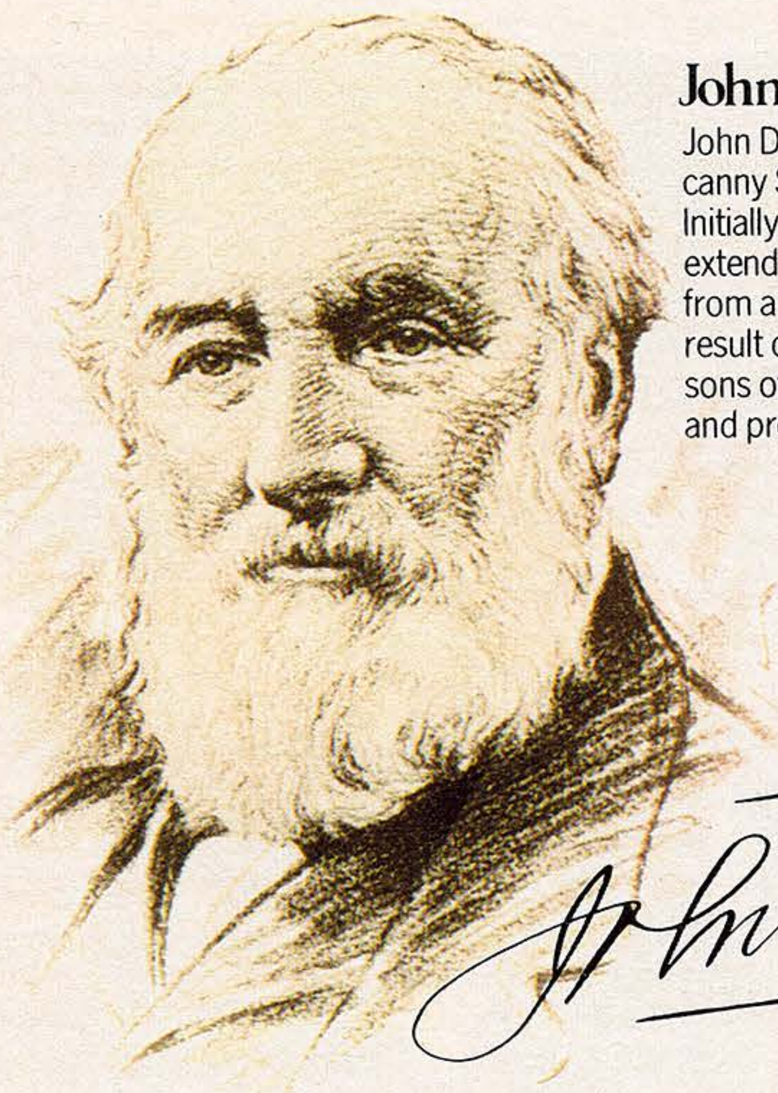

John Dewar 1806–1880.

John Dewar began his business as a canny Scot would. Cautiously. Initially a local business, John Dewar extended it until orders were received from a wide area in Scotland. As a result of their father's efforts, the sons of John Dewar inherited a stable and prosperous concern.

Dewar's First Premises.

A small wine and spirit shop at 111, High Street, Perth. John Dewar began his new venture in these humble premises in May 1846.

Dewar's Export Drive.

The first export drive was aimed at England. Once a London base had been secured, the Dewar family set out to conquer the world. Today, Dewar's whiskies are enjoyed world-wide. Of the 250,000 bottles produced daily, 9 out of 10 are exported. England is no longer regarded as an export market!

Dewar's Maturing.

After distillation, Scotch, malt and grain whiskies must be matured in wooden casks. This process, sometimes lasting as long as 15 years, transforms the spirit into a smooth mellow whisky, ready for blending and bottling. Dewar's were the first firm in Scotland to bottle their own blended Scotch whisky.

The Dewar Highlander.

The symbol of the House of Dewar, the Dewar Highlander is known all over the world.

Dewar's Popular Faces.

Dewar's "White Label," and Ancestor. These are the faces of Dewar's that are recognised all over the world. Everything Dewar's have learnt about making Scotch whisky during more than 125 years, goes into these bottles.

The Dewar Highlander.

A lot when it's Dewar's

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND HISTORY IN IRELAND

Irish is the language the former *An Taoiseach* Jack Lynch used when he addressed the opening session of the newly elected European Parliament in his capacity as Prime Minister of Ireland and President of the EEC. And Irish was the first vernacular European language after Latin and Greek to be written down. Still spoken in parts of the country every day, its roots trace back deep into the Celtic past, and the tangles and knots of centuries of civilized glory as well as troubled history inspired much that is enduring in the literatures of both languages now current in Ireland. From elaborately ornamented traditional singing through the rhythms of the *lilt* to placenames that bring the countryside to life, the language itself and its undertow on the currents of English as the Irish speak it play major roles in animating the unique character which gives Ireland its national identity.

Irish is a Celtic language in the Indo-European language group. Gaelic, which it is often called, refers more specifically to the language of Scotland's Highlands, a dialect of Irish. The Celts formed Europe's first empire. Originating in the area of Central Europe now comprising Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria, Switzerland, and parts of Germany, they were a mixed people unified by a common language and culture which they carried eastward into Asia Minor (Galatia) and westward to Northern Spain, France, and the British Isles. *Keltoi* or *Galatoi* to the Greeks, and *Galli* to the Romans they nearly conquered, the Celts settled northern Italy with the forebears of Virgil and Catullus, sacked Delphi, and fought as mercenaries for the Egyptians before succumbing to Caesar and the *Pax Romana*. Of all the Celtic countries only Ireland escaped Romanization, never having been conquered by the legions, and so preserved longest those unique Celtic elements which constitute a significant, often overlooked, substratum of the formation of Europe.

Druid, Bard and Scribe

Irish literature at the western extreme of the Indo-European world, like Sanskrit at the eastern, preserves the most archaic and original elements of early European culture, undisturbed by developments in Mediterranean civilization. The Druids, a priestly caste like the Brahmins, transmitted their culture orally in highly organized early universities teaching genealogy, history, law, medicine, and mythology. When the Romans destroyed the Druids, the poets, or Bards, assumed this function. There exists an earlier form of writing known as *ogham,* but the Christianization of Ireland in the fifth century introduced writing as we know it, and scribes now began to replace the poets as the conservators of tradition.

Early manuscripts copied the Scriptures in Latin and Greek, but by the sixth century Irish scribes had begun annotating these texts in their own language and filling dull moments with marginalia in the form of poems or comments on current events. These poetic observations in Irish became the first nature lyrics in European literature.

A hedge before me, one behind,
a blackbird sings from that,
above my small book many-lined
I apprehend his chat.

Up trees, in costumes buff,
mild accurate cuckoos bleat,
Lord love me, good the stuff
I write in a shady seat.
(Version: Flann O'Brien)

Their comments often give us insight into the vicissitudes of their daily life.

Bitter the wind tonight,
combing the sea's hair white:
from the North, no need to fear
the proud sea-coursing warrior.
(Version: John Montague)

While the Continent endured what historians call the Dark Ages, Ireland was the Isle of Saints and Scholars, a refuge for students and teachers. Bede praised the Irish for their hospitality: free board and tuition. From these universities came the missionaries who established *schottenklöster* like St. Gall throughout northern Europe, and they contributed great medieval philosophers like Eriugena ("of Ireland") and Duns Scotus (*scotus* being the Latin for Irishman). The verseforms of Irish monks on the Continent may well have provided the models for the earliest rhyming Latin hymns. Charlemagne recruited professors and students from Ireland to set up his own court schools, and Alcuin, his chief scholar, corresponded with his Irish teachers.

Irish developed as a literary language in this area of scribes who preserved, with great tolerance and a minimal Christian gloss, the great tales of pagan Ireland in manuscripts as remarkable for their illuminations as for their contents.

Norsemen's raids failed to disrupt the continuity of native Irish culture which absorbed foreigners and rendered them more Irish than the Irish. But the Norsemen returned in more devastating form. Having settled in Normandy, they invaded England in the eleventh and Ireland in the twelfth centuries. Native Irish culture assimilated the first Norman invaders despite statutes enacted to prevent their adopting the Irish language and customs.

A Rival Language and Culture

Irish culture continued essentially undisturbed until the late sixteenth century when the English, under Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, and James I, succeeded for the first time in imposing both significant administrative control and their language in Ireland. From this point forward, Irish had to contend with English as a language and a culture. The relationship between the two is complex. Each strongly affected the other in Ireland. The Bards, dependent on patronage, declined and disappeared along with their patrons, who were replaced by English settlers. The native culture in the Irish language shared the fate of the native Irish. Despite changed political circumstances and active efforts by England and the English-speaking settlers to anglicize Ireland, Irish remained the majority language until well into the nineteenth century. Irish-language poets were reduced to the status of migrant workers during the eighteenth century, a period of profound gloom for the majority of the native population, what Daniel Corkery described as "Hidden Ireland", that majority of the populace ignored culturally by the Anglo-Irish settlers and their descendants who developed Georgian Dublin into a major cultural capital able to boast such luminaries as William Congreve, George Farquhar, Jonathan Swift, Bishop Berkeley, Oliver Goldsmith, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and Edmund Burke. Eighteenth-century Hidden Ireland produced the last works in the Bardic tradition, poems by Dáithí Ó Bruadair, Aoghan Ó Rathaille, Eoghan Ruadh Ó Súilleabháin, Eibhlín Uí Laoghaire, Brian Merriman, and Antoine Ó Rafteire.

But Irish did survive as a folk culture, producing songs and music which encoded the rural nature of the people's lives and their suffering as well as tribal memories of a more glorious past. Sung *a capella* with elaborate ornamentation, these songs are unique in European culture, closest in form to Indian music. They are still sung, even cultivated, today as *sean nós,* the old tradition. They underlie the dance and folk music of Ireland whose revival attracts so many visitors today. Government policies, laws, economic developments, famine, and emigration gradually eroded the language's base as more and more people adopted English. Only the most rural

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Irish preserved their language. But the language adopted by the Irish was also adapted by them. The English spoken in Ireland is distinct from that spoken in England, America, or the Commonwealth countries, because it has as its base the syntax of Irish. The word order, pronunciation, idioms, and often the vocabulary of Irish have affected the Irish use of English so significantly that Irish-English, mutually comprehensible with the Queen's English in most cases, is nonetheless distinct from it. Most people in Ireland today speak English as their first language. But one cannot help noticing the Irish tendency to treat the language as an object or a toy, a still new plaything. And Irish conversation, wit, wordplay, and eloquence are proverbial.

Changing languages is a cultural trauma, and in historical terms a recent one in Ireland. No understanding of Irish culture is possible without knowledge of the role of the language. It is still spoken regularly in areas known as Gaeltachts, situated mainly along the western coast. The Irish government has tried to preserve and encourage the growth of the language throughout this century, but with very mixed results. The secondary influence of Irish on the English spoken in Ireland is of profound cultural significance therefore. A noticeable example of this are Irish placenames. Very often an anglicized placename lightly disguises the Irish original while preserving the original pronunciation. These placenames have their origins in history and mythology and generally commemorate or encapsulate a story. In *The Rough Field,* a contemporary Irish poet, John Montague, utilizes these "shards of a lost tradition":

The heathery gap where the Raparee,
Shane Barnagh, saw his brother die –
On a summer's day the dying sun
Stained its colours to crimson:
So breaks the heart, Brish-mo-cree.

Bris mo chroí: my heart breaks. Seamus Heaney, another contemporary poet, also explores the etymology of placenames in poems like "Anahorish":

My "place of clear water",
the first hill in the world
where springs washed into
the shiny grass

and darkened cobbles
in the bed of the lane.

As a country with two languages and therefore two traditions Ireland has had to develop a unique stance toward its own literature. Efforts to revive interest in Irish at the turn of the century resulted in much writing in Irish which continues today. Indeed literature may represent the language's strongest bid for permanence, and some modern writing in Irish ranks with the best of the earlier Bardic literature. Irish writers using English have had to define for themselves how they can do so in an Irish way. Some writers, most notably Liam O'Flaherty and Brendan Behan, write in both languages and seem to have written best in Irish. These two writers illustrate an interesting problem. O'Flaherty, a native speaker of Irish, learned English, while Behan learned Irish from native speak-

The coast of Ireland is of great scenic variety and is still almost untouched by the hand of man. Idyllic sandy bays alternate with cliffs that may be up to 800 ft. high. The large ports are always situated a short distance inland, in a sheltered position in the estuary.

Die Küste Irlands ist unendlich vielgestaltig und fast unberührt von menschlichen Eingriffen. Verträumte sandige Buchten wechseln ab mit Klippen bis zu einer Höhe von 250 Metern. Die grossen Häfen sind stets etwas im Binnenland angelegt, das heisst an einer geschützten Stelle im Mündungsbecken.

Les côtes du littoral irlandais épousent les formes les plus variées et sont demeurées, en majeure partie, à l'abri des interventions humaines. De rêveuses baies sablées alternent avec des écueils jusqu'à 250 mètres de hauteur.

ers. Most people in Ireland today can speak some Irish. But even the most fluent non-native speakers lack the rich vocabulary of a native speaker. Native speakers writing in Irish face a converse problem. Irish is a rural, coastal language rich in concrete terms for weather, agriculture, and seafaring, but lacking a developed vocabulary for discursive thought or the urban experience. Writers in Irish also face a doubly restrictive audience. Of the minority of people who speak Irish still fewer are sophisticated readers. Yet several writers of major significance have chosen to write entirely in Irish. The most notable was Máirtín Ó Cadhain, whose innovative form and style in Irish rank with any major modern writer's. Several poets have emerged in Irish as well, especially Seán Ó Riordáin, Máirtín Ó Díreáin, Maire Mhac an tSaoí, Pearse Hutchinson, and Tomás Mac Síomóin.

Douglas Hyde, founder of the very influential Gaelic League and first President of Ireland, had advocated a return to Irish, the de-Anglicization of Ireland. W.B. Yeats asked instead that Irish writers return to their native literature for inspiration but write an English which would be Irish in character. Lady Gregory, J.M. Synge, and Sean O'Casey each invented a poetic dialect imitative of Irish-English. Thomas MacDonagh and Austin Clarke fit English to Irish prosody, James Joyce forged his own style, subsuming the whole variety of Irish ways of speaking English and cognizant of Irish as well. Since English displaced Irish as the common language, all people in Ireland have been acutely aware of the nature of both languages.

Irish Today

Modern Irish is evolving in response to the pressures of an English-speaking environment and social changes which threaten its traditional bases. Renewed interest in traditional Irish music and its origins in the deep structures of the language has motivated young people to seek out the language in its native environment. Irish television and radio, newspapers and magazines regularly transmit material in Irish side by side with English, and any stay in Ireland will familiarize the visitor with dual-language road and street signs and a subtle flavor to Irish life which defies Anglicization. Irish music may be the best entrance to the native culture for the non-Irish speaker since it operates non-verbally but derives from the same roots. Irish is a difficult language to learn, but many courses using modern techniques bring it within reach. Its status as the primary language of any group in Ireland is severely threatened – there can be very few Irish-speakers today who are not bilingual – and the possibility, advocated by Irish-language groups, that the populace as a whole become bilingual seems remote. But Irish demonstrates a stubborn vitality akin to that of the people who continue to speak it, and the recent decision by an Irish poet well established in English to write henceforward only in Irish may bode well for the cultivation of the language. Michael Hartnett has bidden farewell to English to write as Mícheál Ó hArtnéide:

I have made my choice
and leave with little weeping:
I have come with meagre voice
to court the language of my people. ●

La résistance en chansons

L'histoire mouvementée des souffrances endurées par l'Ile verte jusqu'à la fondation d'une République d'Irlande indépendante se reflète dans la musique du pays à un point qu'aucun autre pays européen n'a connu. Et la musique, chez les Irlandais au sens patriotique aigu, doués vocalement aussi bien pour le chant en solo que pour celui pratiqué dans de petites chorales, n'a jamais cessé de prendre la forme du lied qui, souvent accompagné d'un seul instrument, a exprimé pendant des siècles, avant toute autre chose, la tentative désespérée d'un peuple opprimé de conquérir son indépendance nationale et une meilleure existence. En tous les cas, il existe encore une génération d'Irlandais qui se souviennent de l'époque pas si lointaine où chanter ou même simplement siffler certains «Songs of resistance», en Irlande, était contraire à la loi anglaise et par conséquent punissable. Beaucoup de ces textes semblent avoir des racines historiques tellement profondes que la plupart des Irlandais, au pays comme partout où ils ont émigré déjà depuis des générations, continuent aujourd'hui de les chanter avec enthousiasme, sans d'ailleurs empêcher la composition de nouveaux chants. En ce sens, le chant du peuple irlandais est à la fois riche de traditions et animé d'une sève toujours renouvelée.

Il se peut que l'historiographie étrangère, notamment parce qu'influencée par l'optique anglaise, définisse le *lamento* si émouvant des Irlandais, à certains instants, comme exagéré. N'oublions pas que l'île irlandaise fut une colonie anglaise de 1169 à 1923, dont la partie principale (après la séparation de la province de l'Ulster, à majorité protestante, continuant d'appartenir au Royaume-Uni) resta un dominion au sein du Commonwealth jusqu'à la totale indépendance acquise en 1938, et qu'elle se sépara définitivement de la couronne britannique pour s'ériger en République d'Irlande, en 1948 seulement! C'est un fait que les événements historiques, racontés par les bardes irlandais pendant huit siècles en des paroles ailées, ont, en dépit de compréhensibles perspectives subjectives, un caractère de vérité souvent particulièrement brutal.

Avec opiniâtreté, ironie, foi dans l'avenir, les Irlandais ont non seulement survécu à l'oppression politique, économique et humaine, mais aux effets des tentatives systématiques des Anglais d'imposer, dès le XIVe siècle, dans l'Ile de Emeraude, une muselière à la langue, à la littérature, à la poésie et à la musique du cru. Pas étonnant qu'ensuite, les atrocités d'un Cromwell qui, par fanatisme religieux, avec ses milices, a exterminé des villages entiers d'Irlande, transparaissent d'une façon ou d'une autre, sous forme allusive, dans les chants de plainte des Irlandais. Plus surprenante est, compte tenu de cette expérience et d'expériences ultérieures, l'objectivité de ces philosophes, écrivains et poètes d'Irlande que justement l'Albion accusait de céder à la sensiblerie et qui toujours surent faire la différence entre la minorité des perfides colonisateurs à la grande majorité du peuple bon enfant que sont les Anglais.

Trois événements surtout ont, durant ces 200 dernières années, frappé les esprits des Irlandais de façon si durable qu'ils reviennent sans cesse sous la plume des auteurs de textes de lieder: la grande révolte manquée de 1798, la famine catastrophique des années 1846–1851 et la guerre d'indépendance des années 1918–1921. Liés étroitement à ces thèmes principaux, il faut leur adjoindre d'une part les anciens et nouveaux chants héroïques où chanteurs et rebelles, poètes et martyrs pour la cause irlandaise s'identifient, et, d'autre part, les lieder où l'on chante l'émigration, déjà au XVIIe siècle, en dépit de l'amour patriotique, comme l'unique chance de survivre. Il n'y a rien d'étonnant par conséquent à ce que nombre de lieder, chantés par les volontaires de la jeune armée américaine, pendant la guerre d'indépendance d'après 1776 de la Nouvelle Angleterre contre la puissance coloniale britannique, aient manifestement été de souche irlandaise. De surcroît, les musiciens ambulants irlandais ont exercé, de manière générale, une forte influence sur le développement de la musique populaire américaine, influence qui se reconnaît jusqu'à l'actuel Folk-and-Country Music.

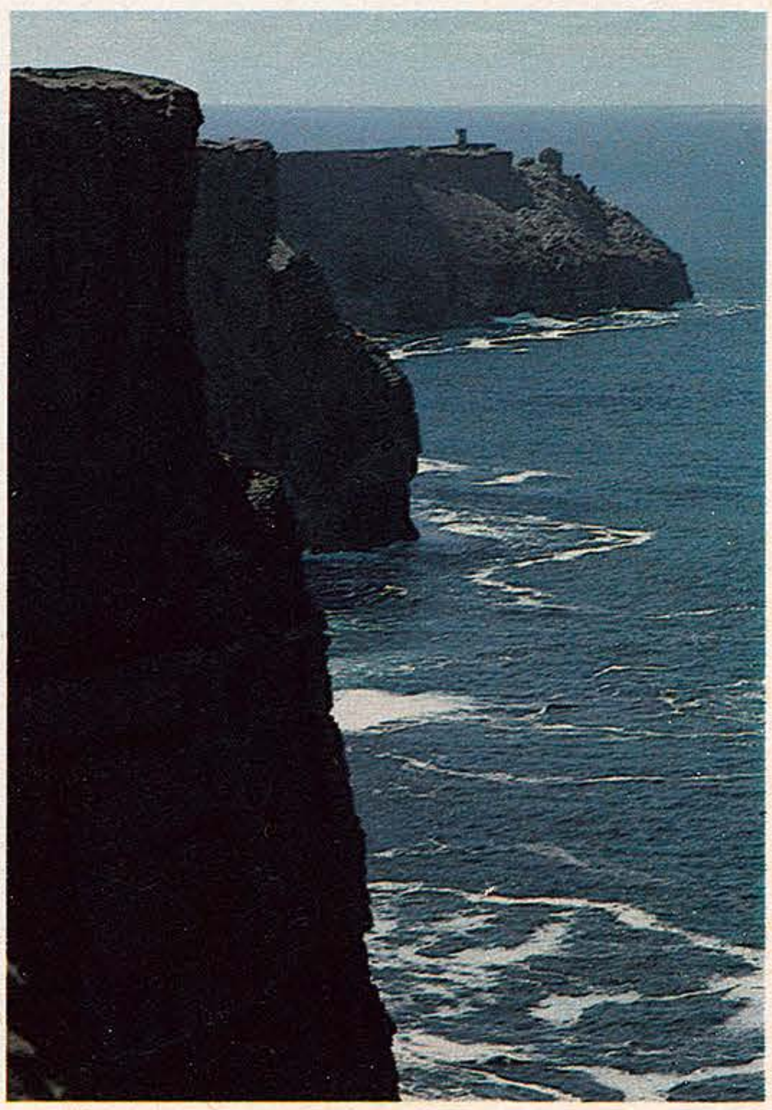
En tout état de cause, il serait faux de ne considérer les lieder typiques des Irlandais que comme des «Folk Songs». Il serait bien plus exact de les définir, notamment à cause de leur thématique, comme des *«National Ballads»,* ainsi qu'on a pris l'habitude de faire en Irlande même, et même si l'on trouve parmi eux des chansons d'amour. Car ces chansons sont aussi souvent d'un climat sombre, désespéré, plaintif, rappelant la célèbre anecdote irlandaise selon laquelle un jeune homme a proposé le mariage à son amie en lui demandant si cela lui ferait plaisir d'être enterrée dans le caveau de sa famille...

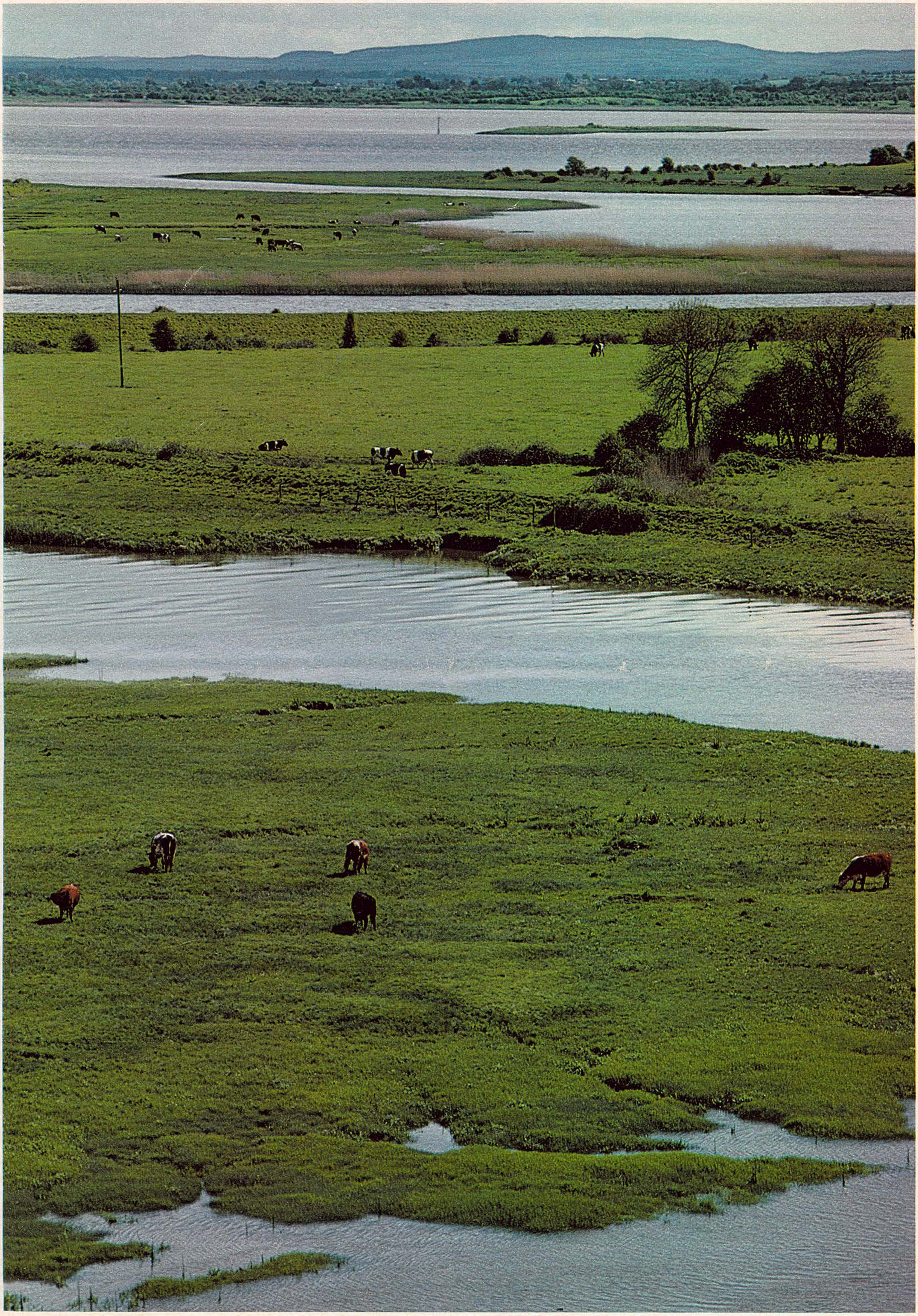
Le violon, capable de rire comme de pleurer, est devenu l'instrument par excellence des Irlandais, en guise d'instrument soliste ou d'instrument d'accompagnement. La harpe, elle, orne depuis le Moyen Age déjà les armoiries de l'île. N'oublions pas qu'en anglais, on distingue le mot *«violin»,* pour désigner l'instrument de concert, du mot *«fiddle»,* désignant le violon d'usage populaire, bien qu'il s'agisse d'instruments absolument semblables. On distingue également la manière de jouer et, à ce point de vue, la distinction anglaise entre «violonist» et «fiddler» se retrouve, dans les équivalents français, entre «violoniste» et «violoneux». Le fiddler irlandais réussit à tirer de son instrument à cordes des mélodies uniques qui, reprises en ostinato, n'engendrent pas la monotonie, mais bien au contraire créent une sensation de rythmes diaboliques. On emploie également la flûte de bois en guise d'instrument mélodique, tandis que la guitare et le banjo sont le plus souvent utilisés pour l'accompagnement. Les ballades classiques de l'Irlande sont la plupart chantées, sur l'accompagnement de ces instruments, par de puissantes voix de barítons, qui alternent entre les solos et le chant choral. Enfin, signalons un instrument qui, au fond, n'en est pas un, mais témoigne bien de l'imagination propre aux Irlandais: deux cuillères dont les poignées sont recourbées de sorte qu'elles tiennent seules autour de deux doigts, sont maniées à la manière de castagnettes, s'entrechoquent et produisent un rythme inoubliable. *Walter Günthardt*

The lush green conjured forth by the moist Atlantic climate forms the soft background of all Irish scenes. It is a green that also borders the roads in shrubs and bushes of many differing shades. A sudden ray of sun may draw the eye to the chequered pattern of stone walls that reduce the sweeping, hilly landscape to human proportions and convey a feeling of protection, but also of being shut out from the life that is enclosed within them. The dramatic backdrop of the moving clouds creates new light effects minute by minute, now clothing the landscape in gloom, then in silver-grey, only to bring it to life a moment later with moving patches of radiant light.

Das vom feuchten atlantischen Klima hervorgezauberte Grün bildet die zarte Kulisse für alle irischen Szenerien. Ein Grün, das sich in vielerlei Nuancen im Busch- und Strauchwerk entlang den Landstrassen hinzieht. Ein plötzlicher Sonnenstrahl lenkt das Auge auf die schachbrettartig angelegten Steinwälle, die die weite Hügellandschaft auf ein menschliches Mass reduzieren und das Gefühl der Geborgenheit wie des Ausgeschlossenseins vom Leben dahinter vermitteln. Das dramatische Wolkentheater am Himmel löst von Minute zu Minute neue Lichteffekte aus, die die Landschaft mal in Düsterkeit einkleiden, mal in silberne Gräue hüllen, um sie dann wieder durch Streifen hellsten Lichts liebevoll zu zergliedern.

Les verts paysages, brossés comme d'un coup de baguette magique grâce au climat humide de l'Atlantique, forment le tendre décor de toute mise en scène irlandaise. Ce vert prend des nuances séduisantes tout au long des routes de campagne bordées de buissons et de broussailles. Soudain, un rayon de soleil attire l'œil sur des fortifications de pierre disposées comme des échiquiers, qui redonnent une dimension humaine au vaste paysage de collines et créent un sentiment de sécurité et de vie s'épanouissant bien à l'abri. Les nuages jouent dans le ciel un jeu dramatique de lumières changeantes de minute en minute, semblant costumer le paysage d'un manteau tour à tour foncé, gris argent, puis rayé de bandes lumineuses.

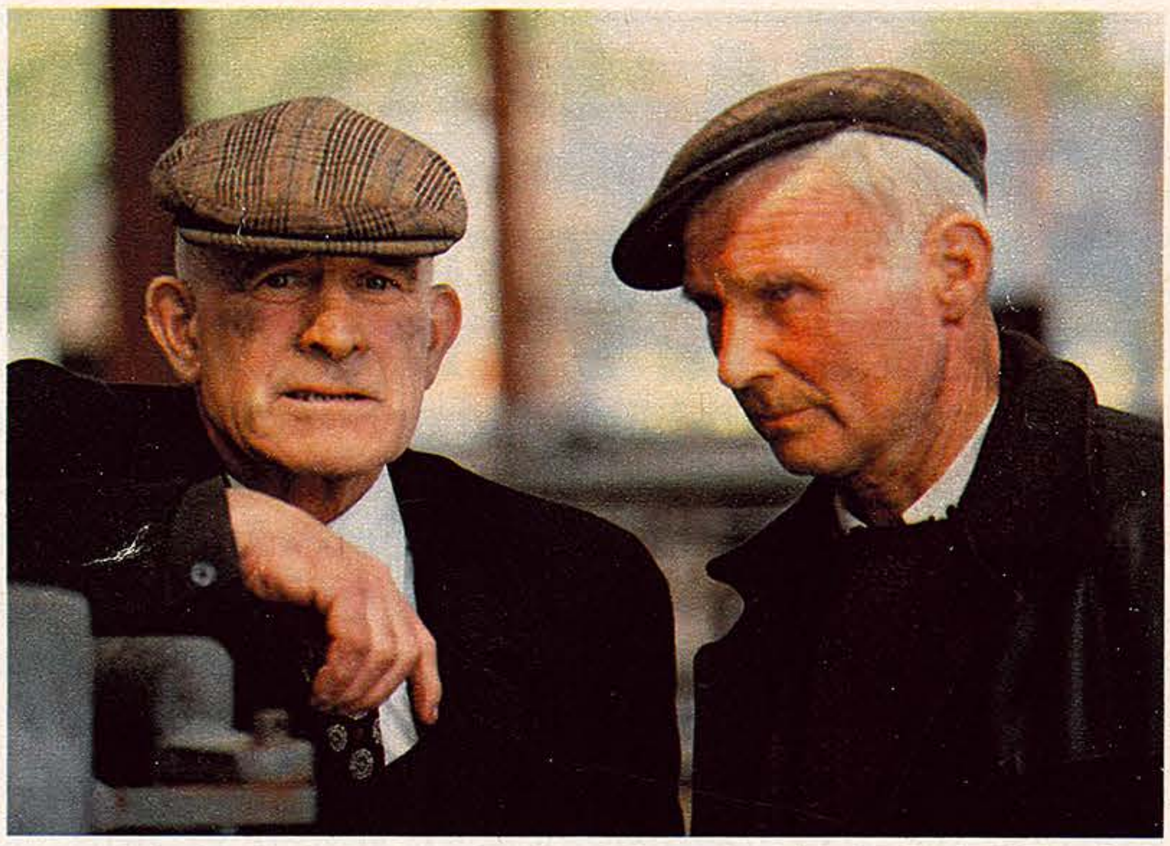


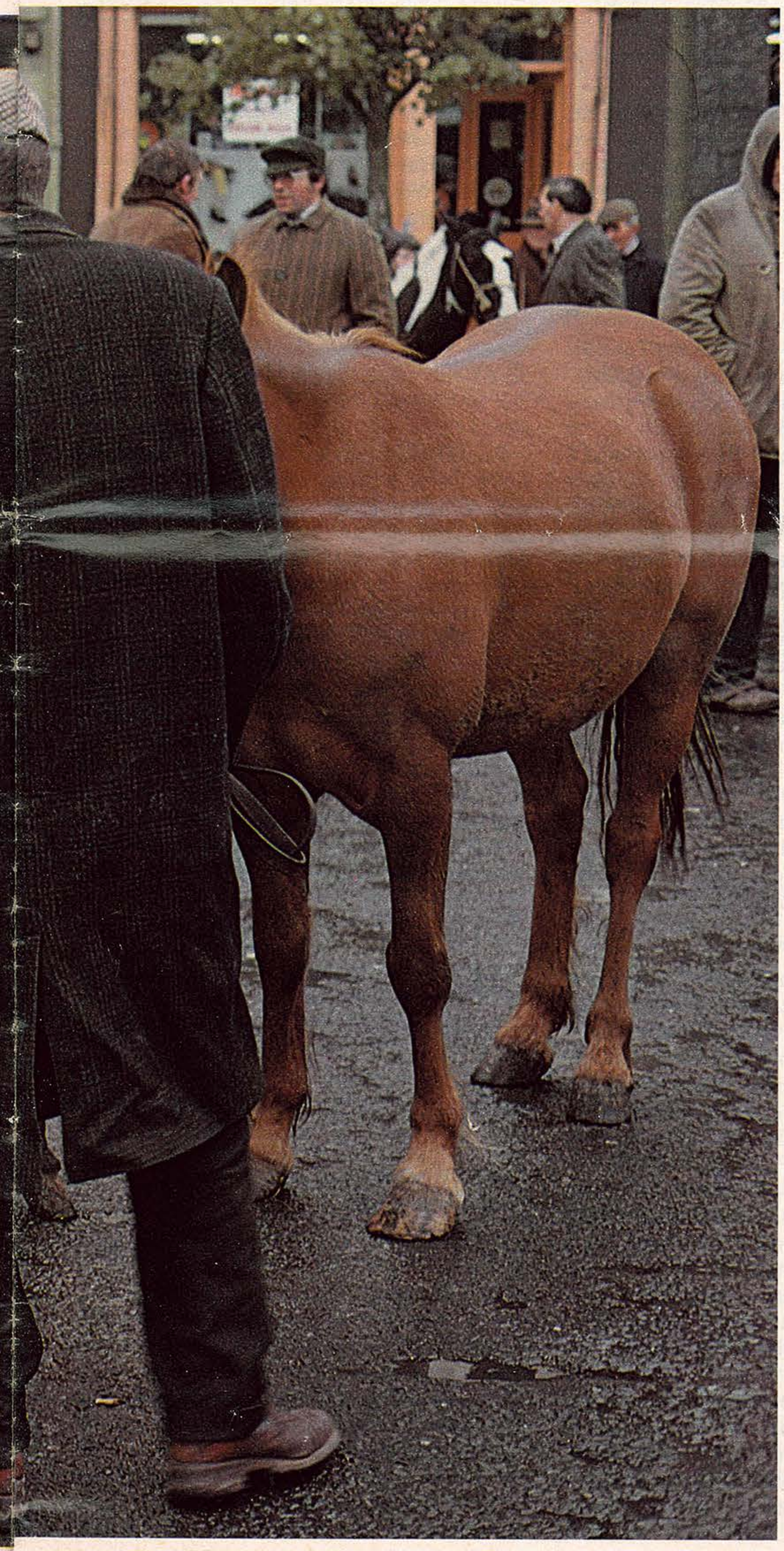


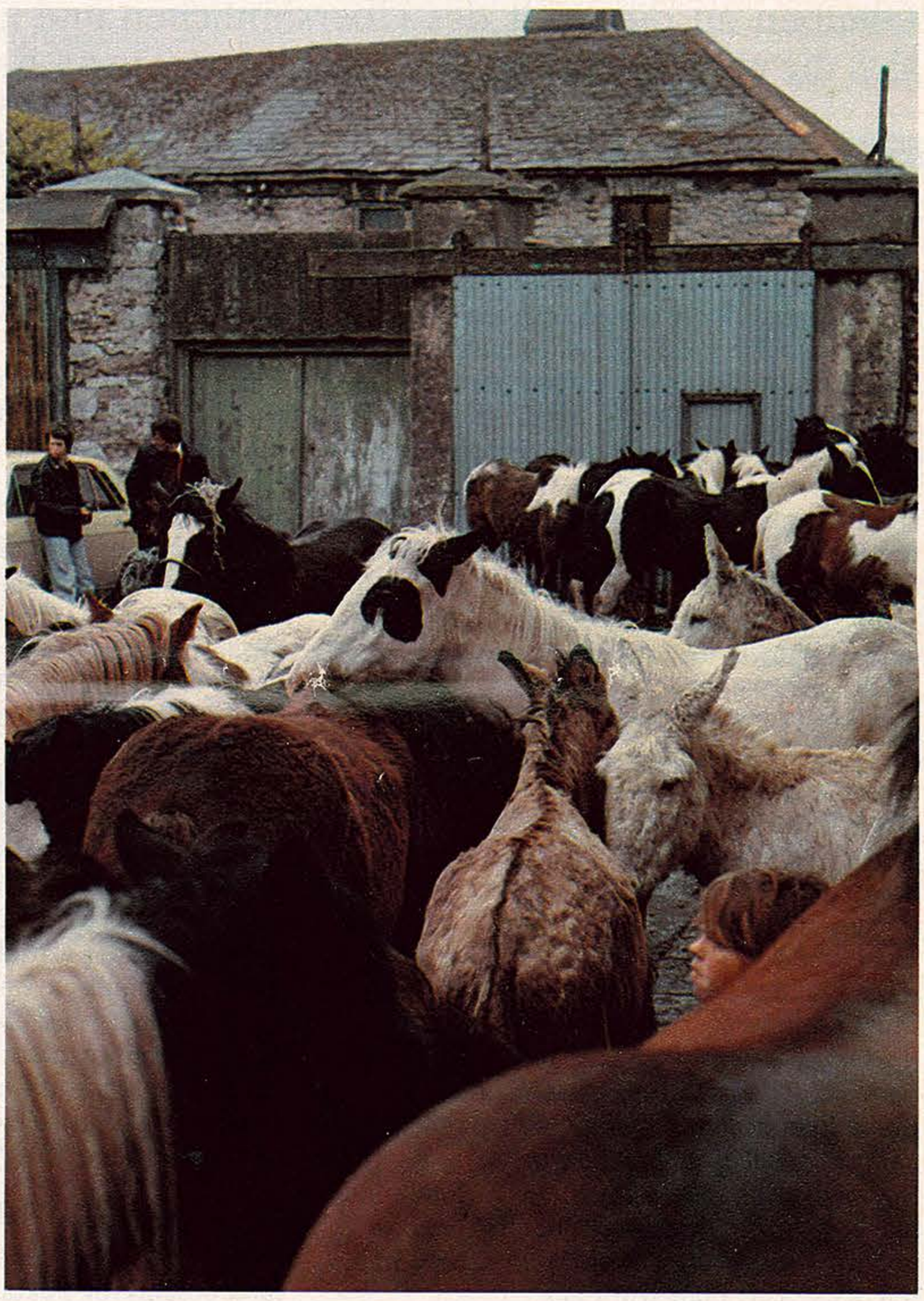
Sport is one of the main subjects of conversation, and horseraces are such an important part of social life that they often figure, together with betting information, on the racing pages of daily papers. The racing season runs from March to November, and the famous Irish race-courses are within easy reach of Dublin. Horse-lovers should not fail, however, to visit the less conspicuous rural horse markets and auctions. The little country town of Dungarvan beside the sea in the south of County Waterford, for instance, is the scene of an annual sale of farmhorses, ponies and donkeys with an occasional purebred or racehorse among them. Bright local boys who have togged themselves up in their Sunday suits for the occasion use long halters to keep the knots of nervous animals under control.

Sport ist Tagesgespräch, und Pferderennen sind ein so wichtiger Teil des gesellschaftlichen Lebens, dass sie – natürlich zusammen mit Wettabschlüssen – in allen Tageszeitungen figurieren. Die Rennsaison läuft von März bis November; die berühmten irischen Rennbahnen sind von Dublin leicht erreichbar. Pferdenarren sollten sich freilich auch die ländlichen Pferdemärkte und -auktionen nicht entgehen lassen. Der Marktflecken Dungarvan im Süden der Grafschaft Waterford ist jährlich einmal Schauplatz eines Feilschens um Ackergäule, Ponies und Esel, in deren Mitte vereinzelt auch ein Renn- und Rassepferd zu bestaunen ist. Aufgeweckte Buben, für den Anlass in den Sonntagsanzug gesteckt, halten die in Rudel gedrängten unruhigen Tiere an langen Halftern in Schach.

Le sport nourrit les conversations journalières, et les courses de chevaux jouent un rôle si important dans la vie sociale qu'à cause des paris elles figurent chaque jour dans les quotidiens. La saison des courses va de mai en novembre. Les célèbres champs de courses irlandais sont d'accès facile à partir de Dublin. Les passionnés de chevaux ne manquent pas de fréquenter aussi les marchés ruraux et les mises aux enchères. Le bourg de Dungarvan, dans la région sud de County Waterford, est une fois par an le théâtre de marchandages autour de chevaux de labour, de poneys et d'ânes, au milieu desquels on découvre avec un étonnement admiratif aussi l'un ou l'autre cheval de courses ou de race. Des garçons endimanchés tiennent en échec au moyen d'un long licol les chevaux indisciplinés.







VOM LAND DER EWIGJUNGEN

Die irische Landschaft bietet eine einzigartige Kulisse für eine reiche Literatur, denn wo sonst gibt es eine so grosse, vom Festland recht entfernte Insel, die durch einen Kranz von Randgebirgen vor äusseren Einflüssen bewahrt blieb und der dank ihrer Bodenstruktur ein unentrinnbares Landschaftsbild – einer Untertasse mit erhöhten Rändern gleichend – aufgeprägt wurde. Im Westen berennt der Atlantik die 700 Meter hohen Felswände, in den Klippen grollt das Meer, Flüsse verschwinden, unterirdische Seen stehen in unerforschtem Zusammenhang mit dem Meer. Der ewige Westwind trägt vom Atlantik Regenwolken ins Land, Sümpfe und Moore entstanden, über denen die Nebel hinziehen. So ist es nicht verwunderlich, dass der irische Mensch, der noch bis ins sechzehnte Jahrhundert hinein in grösster Einsamkeit lebte, in den jagenden Wolken und Nebelfetzen Geschöpfe – Wesenheiten – zu sehen wähnte. Für ihn war die ganze Natur beseelt. Aus diesem Glauben an die Welt des Übersinnlichen und an die in der Natur waltenden Kräfte entwickelte sich die erste Dichtung. Sie erzählt von Tír-na-n-Og, dem Land der Ewigjungen.

Tír-na-n-Og ist das Land der Ewigjungen, die auf gälisch Siddhe oder Shee heissen und auch Feen oder Kleine Leute genannt werden. Nur kniehoch an Grösse sind sie, aber königlich in Haltung und Gewand. Sie wohnen teils auf einer fernen Insel, die plötzlich auftaucht und verschwindet und wieder auftaucht, vor allem aber in unterirdischen Reichen, deren fürstliche Hallen in unvorstellbarer Pracht erstrahlen. Wenn im Sommer die lila Teppiche des Heidekrauts die sanften Hügel überziehen, wenn der jahraus, jahrein blühende Ginster mit seinen goldgelben Blüten auf allen Hängen lodert, wenn der weisse und rosa Weissdorn im Mai an den Heckenwegen seine bräutlichen Schleier angelegt hat, dann sieht man bei Vollmond die Ewigjungen aus ihrem Reich hervorkommen. Feenkönig und Feenkönigin mit Gefolge reiten auf Pferden zu Musik und Tanz und ritterlichem Wettspiel in die Nachbarschaft. Denn die Siddhe lieben Musik und Tanz. Im Lande der Ewigjungen gibt es weder Alter noch Tod, weder Tränen noch lautes Gelächter, wie der irische Dichter William Butler Yeats[1] es besungen hat:

«Des Todes Knochenfinger uns nie mehr finden soll im weitgewölbten Traumland, von Liebe übervoll, wo Bäume blühn und tragen das ganze Jahr hindurch, wo Bäche überfluten von golden braunem Met. Die Sackpfeife bläst ein Spielmann unter dem Silbergezweig, und im Reigentanz dreht sich die Königin mit Augen so blau wie Eis.»

Die Ringburgen

Der Glaube an die Ewigjungen wurde unterstützt durch das Vorhandensein der zahllosen Ringburgen: Hunderte von kreisrunden Hügeln, einst prähistorische Siedlungen, hinter deren hohen Steinwällen die damaligen Bewohner Schutz gesucht hatten, sind längst von Gras und Gebüsch überwuchert (falls nicht die Neugier moderner Forscher sie aufgewühlt und Kammer und Küche und mancherlei Gerät blossgelegt hat). Aber das Landvolk ist immer noch überzeugt, dass hier auf den runden Rasenflächen die Ewigjungen bei Vollmond ihren Reigen tanzen, und sie nennen die Hügel Feenfestungen (Fairy-Fort). Späte Heimkehrer können die «Feen» beim Tanz beobachten, falls sie vorsichtig durchs Gesträuch spähen – vorsichtig, denn belauschen lassen sich die Feen nicht gern, das beweisen die «Feenpfeile» aus Flintstein, die von den Feen auf Eindringlinge geschleudert wurden. Man hat sie rings um die Burgen auf dem Ackerland gefunden. Deshalb meiden die Landleute die Feenfestungen, gälisch *ráth* genannt, und nehmen Rücksicht auf die «Guten Leutchen», damit nicht Haus und Hof und Vieh verwünscht werden und zu Schaden kommen. In einer modernen Erzählung von Sean O'Faolain beklagt sich ein staatlicher Baumeister seufzend, wie oft er geplante Strassen anders legen oder den Standort geplanter Häuser verschieben müsse, nur um die Feen nicht zu beleidigen, deren Weg gerade dort entlangführt. Und in Micheál MacLiammóirs[2] Schauspiel «Wo die Zeit stillesteht» erregen seltsame Ereignisse das Kopfschütteln und das Grauen der Landleute, denn ein französischer Psychologe und Forscher hatte sich leichtsinnigerweise sein Haus mitten auf einem Feentanzplatz errichten lassen – dabei waren doch die zahlreichen Ebereschen ein untrügliches Zeichen, dass der Grund und Boden den Ewigjungen gehörte.

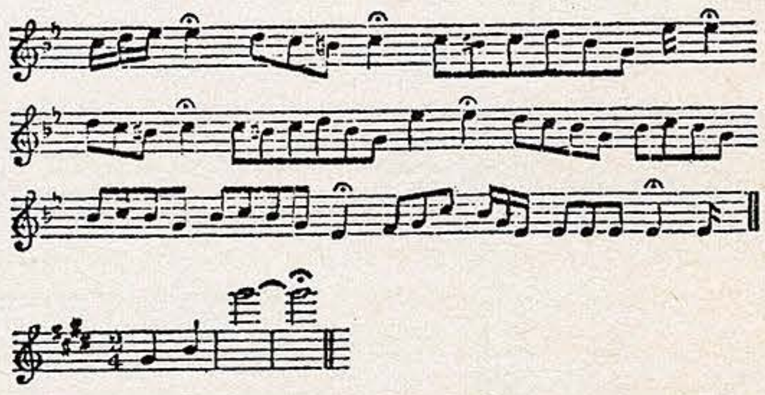
Üble Einzelgänger

In seinem Buch *Fairy and Folk Tales of Ireland* beschreibt Yeats in seinen Einführungen zu den von ihm ausgewählten Geschichten die guten und die bösen Feen, die im *Middle Kingdom,* dem Mittelreich, wohnen, wie das Land der Ewigjungen auch oft genannt wird. Die bösen Feen sind Einzelgänger; niemals schliessen sie sich dem Festzug der fröhlichen Scharen an, deren Hauptfeste der Vorabend des Maitags und die Mittsommernacht sind. Böse Feen stehlen kleine Kinder und legen statt ihrer einen verrunzelten *Jasrai* in die Wiege, der tausend oder zweitausend Jahre alt ist. Oder sie verlocken ein schönes Mädchen, das vielleicht als Braut für den Feenkönig ausersehen wurde, mit ihnen ins Feenreich zu ziehen. Wer aber der Feenmusik gelauscht hat, der verzehrt sich in Sehnsucht, bis er stirbt, denn irdische Freuden gelten ihm nichts mehr. In Yeats' Gedicht *The Stolen Child* endet jede Strophe mit dem lockenden Feenruf:

«Komm hier fort, o Menschenkind,
zu den Wassern und der Wildnis,
Hand in Hand mit einer Fee,
denn die Welt ist so voll Tränen,
wie du's nimmer glauben kannst.»

Auch vom Wasser geht eine rätselhafte Lockung aus. Der irische Erzähler Seumas O'Kelly[3] schildert in einer Geschichte, wie ein junger Mann, ein Flötenspieler, der arglos am Ufer sass und seine Flöte blies, von einer bösen Fee mit einer geheimnisvollen Krankheit geschlagen wurde, weil er ihr nicht ins Reich der Ewigjungen folgen wollte.

Zu den Einzelgängern kann man auch die *Fairy Doctors* zählen, Sterbliche, die jahrelang von den Feen in ihrer Burg zurückbehalten wurden und später als Heilkundige oder Dichter und Musiker, jedenfalls als schweigsame Sonderlinge, in die Menschenwelt zurückkehrten.

In ganz Irland bekannt ist die *Banshee,* eine Fee, die das Ableben eines lieben Menschen beklagt oder gar triumphierend einen Todesfall ankündigt, wenn sie laut kreischend auf dem Dachfirst ihren Ruf ausstösst, der mit der Totenklage, dem «Keenen» der alten Weiber bei einer Leichenwache, Ähnlichkeit hat. Ein Geigenspieler hat den bedrohlichen Schrei der Banshee in Noten aufgezeichnet:

Meerjungfern, Pukas und Wasserpferde

Ein Einzelgänger unter den Feen ist auch das durch den Film *Mr. Harvey* bekanntgewordene *Puka* oder Pooka – dort ein überlebensgrosses Kaninchen, aber meistens tritt es in Gestalt einer Ziege auf, eine Art Puck vielleicht, und eher hilfreich. – Weniger menschenfreundlich sind die *Piast* oder Wasserpferde, die in einsamen Seen leben und harmlose Spaziergänger erschrecken. – Die Merrows oder *Meerjungfern* sind ebenfalls gefürchtet, besonders bei den Fischern, da sie schlechtes Wetter bringen. In einer Kirche

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Elisabeth Schnack, Dr. h.c., Übersetzerin vieler Werke moderner irischer Schriftsteller, lebt nach langem Aufenthalt in Ostasien und nach mehrjährigem Studium an der Universität Genf seit 1950 in Zürich. Wiederholte Reisen und Aufenthalte in Irland.

am Ufer des Shannon, also im Binnenland und noch weit vom Meer entfernt, ist an einem steinernen Pfeiler ein Meerweibchen mit Schuppenleib und Fischschwanz zu sehen. Niemand weiss, warum oder wie es dort hingekommen ist. Ihre Verwandten sind die Wassermänner mit grünem Haar und roten Schweinsäuglein.

Leprechauns

Weit erfreulicher ist der Anblick der kleinen *Leprechauns*. Ihr Name leitet sich von dem gälischen Wort *Leith brog* her, was *Ein*schuhmacher bedeutet, weil man sie stets nur an *einem* Feenschuh arbeiten sieht. Sie sind die Diener der Ewigjungen, und sie allein von allen Feen sind unermüdlich fleissig. Mit langem Bart und in grünem Rock und roter Zipfelmütze – oft auch nur mit einem Pilzhut bedeckt – sitzen sie unter einem buttergelb blühenden Ginsterbusch. So mancher Dichter und manch ein Landkind hat das silberhelle Hämmern gehört, wenn das Leprechaun die durchgetanzten Feenschuhe besohlt. (Obwohl Ungläubige behaupten, das leise «ping-ping» rühre vom Knistern der aufplatzenden Ginsterschoten her.) Jedes Leprechaun hütet einen Topf voll Gold, wie es James Stephens[4] in seinem köstlichen Buch *The Crock of Gold* schildert.

Die (dichterische) Wahrheit über die Ewigjungen

Damit gibt uns James Stephens, vielleicht ohne es zu wollen, eine Erklärung des berühmten «irischen Charmes», der auf einem gewissen Gleichmut, einem Laisser-aller beruht. Aber auch wenn die Iren weniger aktiv sein mögen als wir gehetzten und zeitbesessenen Festland-Europäer, haben sie doch der Welt eine Mythologie geschenkt, die an Schönheit und Wildheit nicht ihresgleichen hat. William Butler Yeats erklärt, die Iren wären nicht so berühmte Geschichtenerzähler geworden, wenn sie sich nicht den Glauben an die Ewigjungen bewahrt hätten. In ihren schönen Legenden und traurigen Sagen haben sie durch die Jahrhunderte in mündlicher Überlieferung aufbewahrt, was sich ihre Ahnen schon in grauer Vorzeit am flackernden Herdfeuer erzählt haben. Als Yeats einmal in seiner Jugend in der strohgedeckten Hütte der alten Biddy sass, wollte er die Wahrheit über die Feen von ihr erfahren. Aber sie war unwillig, über «die» zu sprechen, und gab ihm nur die Antwort: «Ich kümmere mich um meinen Kram und gehe ‹ihnen› aus dem Weg.» Erst als Yeats ihr sagte, dass schon sein Grossvater unten im Tal gewohnt habe, wurde sie gesprächig und erzählte von einer Frau, die aus dem Dorf entführt worden war und sieben Jahre bei den Ewigjungen gewohnt habe, und als sie zurückkam, hatte sie keine Zehen mehr, denn die waren abgetanzt. Eine andere Frau aus Biddys Bekanntschaft war nach Tír-na-n-Og geholt worden, um das Kind der Feenkönigin zu stillen.

«Denn was ihr schwarz auf weiss besitzt...»

Ähnliche Ereignisse gab es früher schwarz auf weiss nur in den billigen Jahrmarktsheftchen zu lesen, die schon Thackeray in seinem *Irish Sketch Book* erwähnt: «Sie wurden nur für das Volk gedruckt und waren für ein paar Kupfer auf den Jahrmärkten zu haben, bevor der Marsch der Wissenschaft die Phantasie aus unsrer Welt vertrieb.» Das irische *Folklore Institute* hat die äusserst seltenen, vom Torfrauch des Herdfeuers angegilbten Heftchen durch Nachdruck in den *Béaloideas* gerettet. Im vorigen Jahrhundert erwachte plötzlich grosses Interesse an der gälischen Sprache und Kultur. Schon vor der für das Land katastrophalen Hungersnot in den vierziger Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts, hatten junge Patrioten die *Young-Ireland*-Bewegung gegründet und bei Irlands Schriftstellern dafür geworben, nicht die englische Literatur nachzuäffen, sondern sich der alten Tradition zu erinnern. Der erste irische Erzähler jener Zeit, dessen Muttersprache das Gälische war, ist William Carleton. Er stammte von armen gälischen Taglöhnern ab, die einen reichen Schatz alter Sagen hegten. Weil seine Eltern von Haus und Hof vertrieben wurden, konnte Carleton nicht studieren und lebte in grösster Armut als Journalist in Dublin. Sein Werk *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry* erschien von 1830–1833 in fünf Bänden. Fast gleichzeitig entfaltete sich eine ungeheure Sammeltätigkeit. Die alten, auf dem Lande lebenden Erzähler, die *Shanachie*, die in streng vorgeschriebener Form ihre alten Geschichten auf gälisch vortrugen, wurden mit und ohne Dolmetscher aufgesucht. So sammelte Crofton Croker Anfang des vorigen Jahrhunderts Geschichten und gab 1825 einen Band *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South West of Ireland* heraus, das erste authentische Werk irischer Folklore, das in England ungeheures Aufsehen erregte und von den Brüdern Grimm ins Deutsche übersetzt wurde. Sein Zeitgenosse war der Bauer und Buchhändler Patrick Kennedy, der zwei Bände alter Geschichten sammelte und *Fireside Stories of Ireland* (1860) und *Legendary Fiction of the Irish Celts* (1870) herausgab. Sehr geschätzt waren auch die von Lady Wilde gesammelten *Ancient Legends of Ireland* (1887). Am umfangreichsten war das Sammelgut Jeremiah Curtins, eines amerikanischen Ethnologen irischer Abstammung, der die Shanachie im ganzen Land aufsuchte und bei seiner Rückkehr die von ihnen vorgetragenen Geschichten übersetzte und in der New Yorker Zeitung «The Sun» und später in drei Bänden herausgab: *Myths and Folklore of Ireland* (1890), *Hero Tales of Ireland* (1894) und *Tales of the Munster Fairies and of the Ghost World* (1895).

Die irische Literatur-Renaissance

Die umfassendste Wiederbelebung der alten gälischen Tradition gelang Douglas Hyde mit der Gründung der unpolitischen Gälischen Liga (1893). Schon 1890 hatte er einen Sammelband *Beside the Fire* herausgegeben, der für die neue Bewegung, die irische Literatur-Renaissance, zu einer Art Bibel wurde. Hyde war ein in Westirland gebürtiger Gutsbesitzer und Gelehrter, dessen Verdienste um die irische Folklore gar nicht genug betont werden können. Sein Buch *Stone of Truth* wurde 1979 von der Irish Academic Press neu herausgegeben. Von 1938–1945 war Hyde der erste Präsident Irlands. – In diesem Zusammenhang müssen auch Yeats und Lady Gregory als Mitinitianten der Literatur-Renaissance genannt werden. Yeats' 1893 veröffentlicher Erzählband *A Celtic Twilight* machte auf Lady Gregory einen so grossen Eindruck, dass sie Geschichten zu sammeln begann und mehrere Bände in ihrem heimatlichen Kiltartan-Dialekt herausgab. – Zu Anfang unseres Jahrhunderts beeinflusste der Patriot und Malerdichter Daniel Corkery den jungen Sean O'Faolain und den drei Jahre jüngeren Frank O'Connor, die sich beide von der Begeisterungswelle mitreissen liessen und später die jetzt allgemein bekannten Erzähler wurden. Eine Fülle junger Dichter tauchte überall auf, Schüler der vier Grossen der Literatur-Renaissance: Yeats, Moore, Joyce und Stephens. Heute gehören die Iren zu den besten Erzählern – eine Gabe, die ihnen die Ewigjungen in die Wiege gelegt haben.

Fragt man einen Iren, ob er an die Ewigjungen glaube, so antwortet er, wenn er ein Landmann ist, vielleicht wie jene Alte auf dieselbe, ihr von Yeats gestellte Frage: «Habe ich denn nicht genug Ärger mit ‹ihnen›?» Und ein moderner Städter wird vermutlich – typisch irisch – antworten: «Je nachdem!» ●

Anmerkungen:

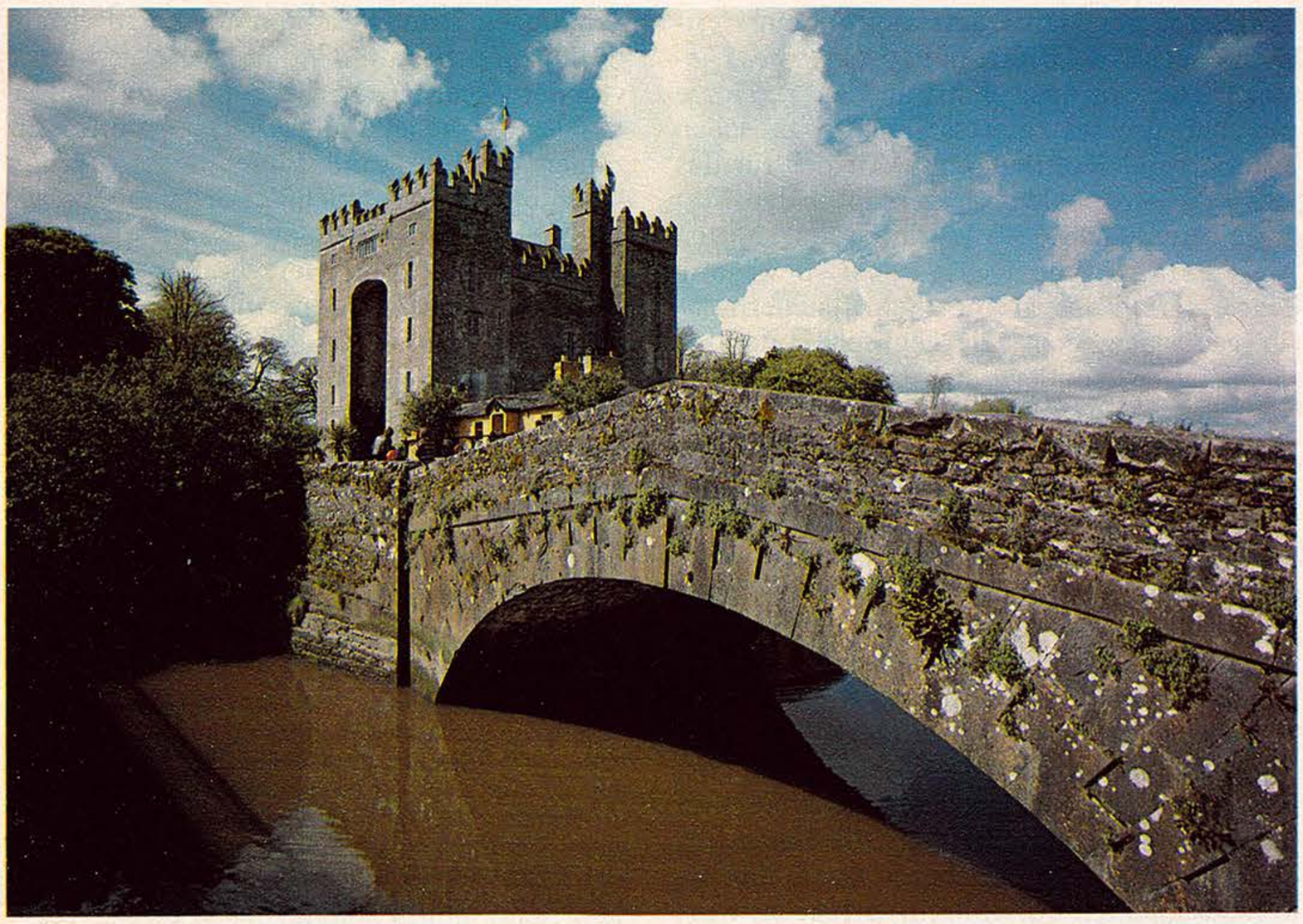
[1] **William Butler Yeats,** geboren 1865 in Sandymount. Von Anfang an bestimmten Irland und seine wechselhafte Geschichte die Entwicklung des grossen Dichters. Er war einer der Initianten der irischen Literatur-Renaissance, die Ende des vorigen Jahrhunderts unter dem Einfluss von Märchensammlern wie Douglas Hyde und vielen anderen eine unerhörte Blütezeit der irischen Dichtung zur Folge hatte. 1904 gründete Yeats mit einigen Dramatikern das Abbey Theatre in Dublin, das sich die Wiederbelebung der alten irischen Tradition zum Ziel setzte. Zu Yeats' frühen Werken gehören das Drama *The Countess Cathleen* (1892; Cathleen ni Houlihan war einer der Namen für das unterdrückte Irland), sodann der Erzählband *The Celtic Twilight* (1893) und die Gedichtsammlung *The Wind among the Reeds* (1899). Später verfasste er noch viele Dramen, Essays und Gedichte. Er starb 1939 in Frankreich und wurde in Drumcliff bei Sligo beigesetzt. Sein berühmter Grabspruch lautet: «Cast a cold eye on life, on death. Horseman, pass by!»

[2] **Micheál MacLiammóir,** bekannter irischer Schauspieler und Dramatiker, wurde 1899 in Cork geboren, studierte an der Slade School in London und gründete nach mehreren Auslandreisen 1928 das bald in der ganzen Welt berühmte Gate Theatre, zusammen mit dem Schauspieler Hilton Edwards. Seine autobiographischen Bücher sind *All for Hecuba* und *An Oscar of no importance;* letzteres handelt von Erlebnissen während seiner Weltreise mit dem Monolog *The Importance of being Oscar*. In seinem Schauspiel *Wenn die Zeit stillesteht* überzeugt er die Zuschauer vom Vorhandensein der Ewigjungen. Noch im hohen Alter spielte er seine Rollen so behende wie ein Jüngling; er starb 1979, betrauert von ganz Irland.

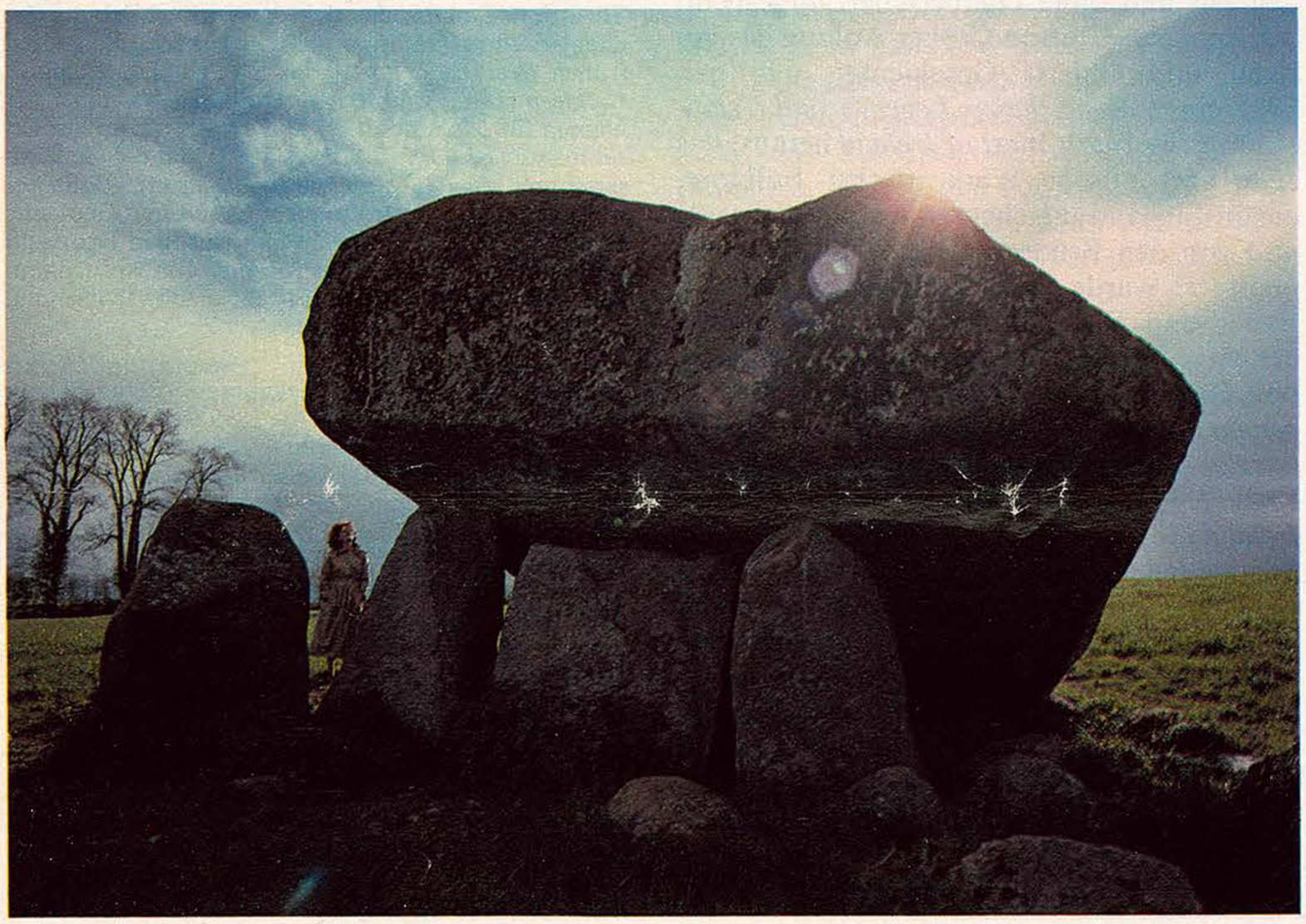
[3] **Seumas O'Kelly,** geboren 1881 in Loughrea in der Grafschaft Galway, wurde in seiner Dichtung beeinflusst von Yeats, Synge, Stephens und Lady Gregory. Bekannt durch seine lyrischen und realistischen Bücher *The Golden Barque* und *The Weaver's Grave* sowie als Verfasser des Kurzromans *The Leprechauns of Kilmeen*. Starb 1918.

[4] **James Stephens,** geboren 1882 in Dublin, armer Herkunft, Lyriker und geistreicher Spötter und Erzähler. Andere Bücher ausser dem berühmten *Crock of Gold* sind die Romane *The Demigods, The Charwoman's Daughter,* der Erzählband *Irish Fairy Tales* (nirgends wurden irische Sagen dichterischer erzählt) und Gedichte. Er war Augenzeuge des Osteraufstands 1916 und schrieb ein Buch darüber. Zog später nach England und arbeitete jahrelang, viel bewundert und belacht, am BBC. Starb 1950. Er war auffallend klein und sah fast wie eins seiner Leprechauns aus.

Auch Seumas O'Kelly hat über die Leprechauns ein ganzes Buch geschrieben, *The Leprechauns of Kilmeen*. Aber während O'Kellys Leprechauns auf dem Lande in der Nähe der Feenfestungen hausen und voll abgefeimter Streiche stecken, um die goldgierigen Bauern um den Topf voll Gold zu prellen, ist James Stephens' Leprechaun in den Wicklow-Bergen ausserhalb der Grossstadt Dublin anzutreffen und von vornehm-sophistischer Art. Den wandernden Dichtern und Philosophen spiegelt es vor, wie gut sie es bei den Ewigjungen haben könnten. In Tír-na-n-Og gibt es immer etwas zu plaudern, was aus der Alltagswelt entführt. Dort, wo auch Aengus Oge, der Gott der Dichtkunst, lebt und webt, können sie ihr Dasein friedlich abseits der Zeit verbringen, ja die Zeit vergessen. In James Stephens' Buch werden als die einzigen Übeltäter die Frauen genannt, weil sie zeitbesessene Störenfriede sind.



Ireland, the land of living stones. Prehistoric and early Christian buildings scattered over the whole country bear witness to a powerful awareness of a life after death, while the ruins of monasteries (picture on the right) and the numerous old strongholds (top left, Bunratty Castle on the Shannon) remain to remind us of Ireland's eventful history. Of the 150 dolmens – megalithic funeral monuments – found in the British Isles, a hundred are located in Ireland. The largest of them, Browne's Hill (Carlow, Leinster), shown at centre, dates from 3000 to 2000 BC. Its roofstone weighs over 100 tons. Round towers, high crosses and churches recalling Ireland's age-old monastic culture are found in great numbers. The towers, mostly free-standing, began to appear about the tenth century. The picture at bottom left shows the former monastery site of Clonmacnois, one of Ireland's holiest places, situated on the banks of the Shannon near Athlone. It was founded about 548 by St. Ciaran and survived over a thousand years. The round towers served as refuges for the monks and their treasures in times of danger and emergency.



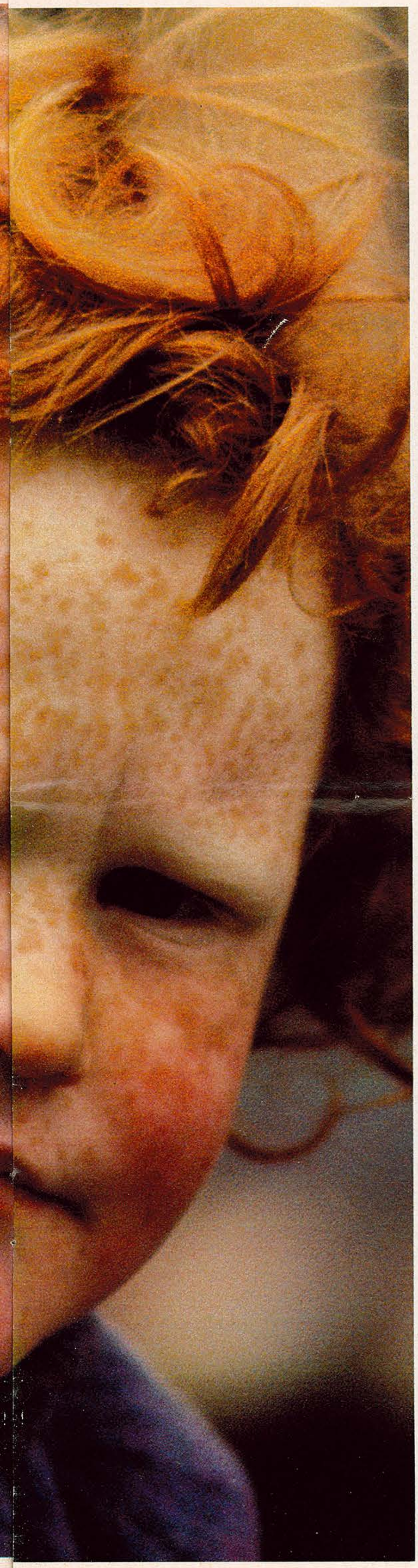
Irland – das Land der «beseelten Steine». Über die ganze Insel verstreut bezeugen prähistorische und frühchristliche Bauten das ausgeprägte Gefühl der Iren für das Jenseitige, während die Klosterruinen (Bild rechts) und die zahlreichen Wehrburgen (Bild links oben: Bunratty Castle am Shannon River) in deutlicher Sprache von der wechselhaften Geschichte des Landes Zeugnis abgeben. Von den 150 Dolmen – megalithische Grabstätten – auf den Britischen Inseln besitzt Irland allein 100. Der grösste, Browne's Hill (Carlow/Leinster, Bild Mitte), datiert zwischen 3000 bis 2000 v. Chr. Sein Dachstein wiegt über 100 Tonnen. Zahlreich sind die Zeugen der monastischen Kultur Irlands, wie Rundtürme, Hochkreuze und Kirchen. Die meist frei stehenden Rundtürme treten seit dem 10. Jahrhundert auf. Unser Bild (links unten) zeigt das einstige Kloster Clonmacnois, eine der heiligsten Stätten Irlands. Das Kloster wurde um 548 von St. Ciaran gegründet und bestand über 1000 Jahre. Die Rundtürme wurden in Notzeiten auch als Zufluchtsort der Mönche und ihrer Schätze gebraucht.

L'Irlande, le pays où les pierres sont demeurées vivantes. Dispersées sur l'île entière, des constructions préhistoriques et des débuts de l'ère chrétienne témoignent du sens aigu des Irlandais pour l'au-delà, tandis que les ruines de couvents (à droite) et les nombreuses citadelles (à gauche en haut: Bunratty Castle sur le Shannon River) montrent à l'envi à quel point l'histoire du pays a été mouvementée. Si l'on compte 150 dolmens – sépultures mégalithiques – sur les îles britanniques, l'Irlande seule en possède 100. Le plus grand d'entre eux, Browne's Hill (Carlow/Leinster), date de 3000 à 2000 ans av. J.-C. Sa pierre de faîte pèse plus de 100 tonnes. Nombreux sont les témoins de la civilisation monastique de l'Irlande, tels que les tours rondes, les calvaires et les églises. Les tours rondes, la plupart isolées, apparaissent dès le Xe siècle. Notre photo (en bas à gauche) montre ce que fut le monastère de Clonmacnois, l'un des lieux «saints» de l'Irlande. Fondé en 548 par Saint Ciaran, il survécut plus de 1000 ans. Les tours rondes servirent également d'abris pour les moines et leurs biens, durant les périodes difficiles.

These are the picture-book Irish, whose red hair and freckles go so well with their winning smiles. Yet it might take quite a long search in the busy streets of Dublin to find an equally convincing specimen of the standard type. By no means all Irishmen have red hair, and in fact dark complexions are just as common. Immigration and invasion, the coming and going of traders and fugitives over the centuries have shuffled the genes just as effectively here as in most other countries of Europe.

Sind es Bilderbuch-Iren, diese Rotschöpfe, deren Lächeln die Sommersprossen so gut bekommen? In Dublins geschäftigen Strassen wird man eine Weile Ausschau halten müssen, um solch prachtvoller Beispiele eines hartnäckigen Klischees ansichtig zu werden. Denn nicht alle Iren haben rote Haare! Häufig begegnet man auch einem dunklen Menschenschlag. Eroberungen, Einwanderungen und Flucht haben hier wie überall in der Welt die Gene der Bewohner in einen Schmelztiegel geworfen.

Sont-ils des Irlandais pour livre d'images, ces rouquins dont le sourire convient si bien aux taches de rousseur? Dans les rues animées de Dublin, on doit prêter un œil longuement attentif avant de tomber sur un modèle particulièrement représentatif de ce cliché indéracinable. Les Irlandais en effet n'ont de loin pas tous une chevelure rousse! L'on rencontre souvent un type d'hommes noirauds. Comme partout dans le monde, les conquêtes, les immigrations, les brassages de population ont permis de nouvelles combinaisons de chromosomes.

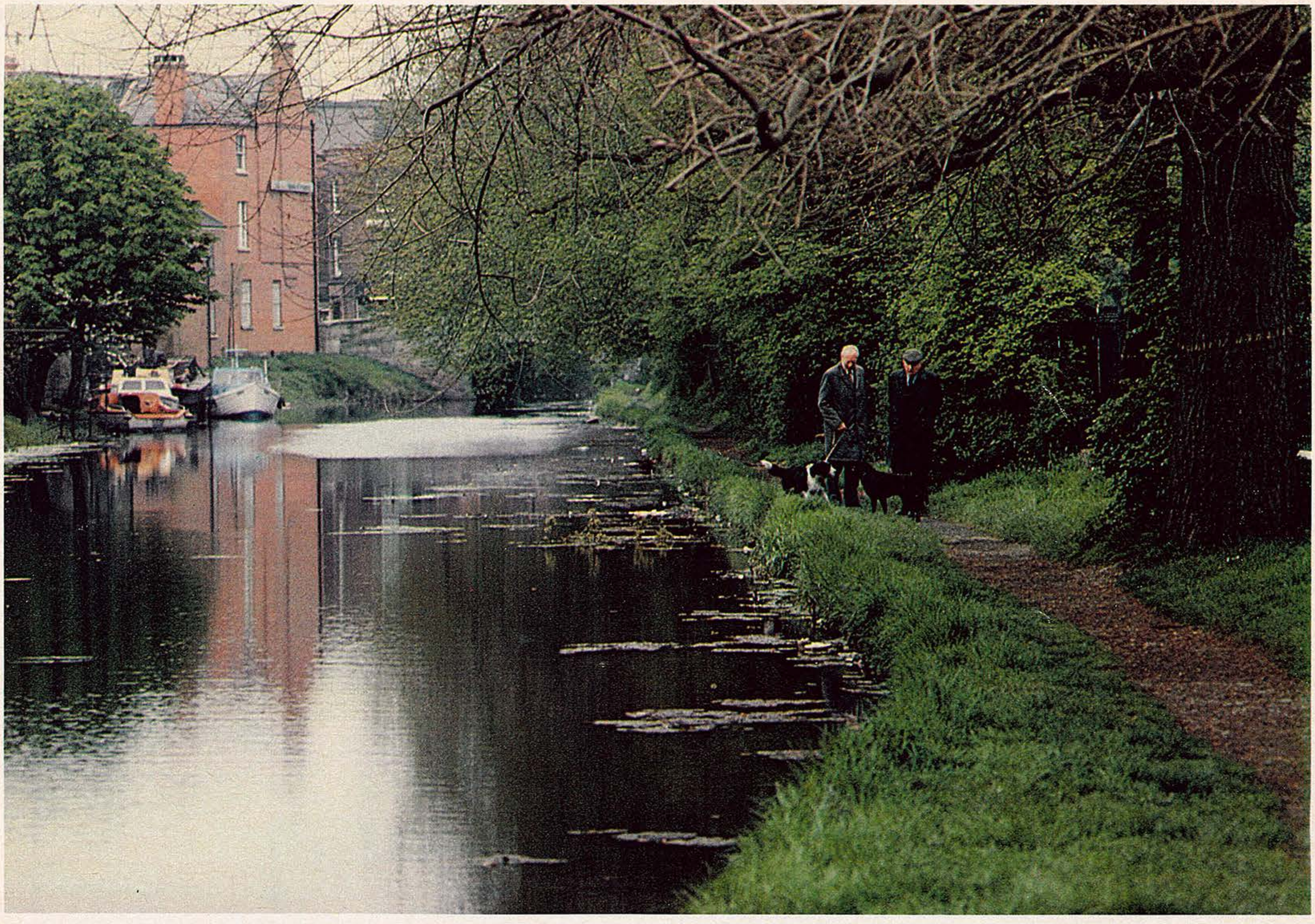


Daniel O'Connell, a Catholic lawyer who established the right of Roman Catholics to hold seats in Parliament back in 1829, has given his name to Dublin's main thoroughfare. He can look down from his pedestal on many buildings that played their part in decisive events affecting Ireland's history. It was on the steps of the neo-classical Post Office that Patrick Pearse read his Declaration of Independence in 1916, which was to be the signal for the most momentous happenings in the story of the Irish capital. On this side of the O'Connell Bridge, beside the River Liffey, stands the Custom House, one of the finest Georgian buildings. It was badly damaged in the disorders of 1921 but has been carefully restored in all its pristine splendour. O'Connell's field of vision extends to the Bank of Ireland and Trinity College, which has produced many eminent scholars, politicians and writers, among them the bishop and philosopher George Berkeley and the satirist Jonathan Swift. The University library also preserves what is no doubt the most famous extant treasure of Celtic Ireland, the richly illuminated Book of Kells.

Daniel O'Connell, der katholische Rechtsanwalt, der das Recht der Katholiken, dem Parlament anzugehören, 1829 durchsetzte, ist Namensgeber von Dublins Hauptverkehrsader. Von seinem Sockel blickt er auf manches Gebäude der Stadt, mit dem sich entscheidende Begebenheiten der irischen Geschichte verbinden. Auf den Stufen des neoklassizistischen Postgebäudes las 1916 Patrick Pearse seine Unabhängigkeitserklärung vor, die den Auftakt zu den folgenschwersten Ereignissen in der Geschichte Dublins geben sollte. Diesseits der O'Connell-Brücke, längs des Liffey River, steht das Custom House, eines der schönsten georgianischen Bauwerke der Stadt; es wurde in den Wirren von 1921 schwer beschädigt. Der Blick O'Connells reicht bis zur Bank of Ireland und zum Trinity College, aus dem zahlreiche hervorragende Gelehrte, Politiker und Schriftsteller hervorgingen: unter anderen der Philosoph und Bischof George Berkeley und der Satiriker Jonathan Swift. Die Bibliothek der Universität beherbergt den berühmtesten Nachlass des keltischen Irland: das Book of Kells.

Daniel O'Connell, l'avocat catholique qui, en 1829, réussit à obtenir que les catholiques soient représentés au Parlement, a donné son nom à l'artère principale de Dublin. De son socle, il observe nombre de bâtiments de la ville qui ont été liés à des événements décisifs de l'histoire irlandaise. Sur les marches du bâtiment des Postes, de style néoclassique, Patrick Pearse a lu, en 1916, sa déclaration d'indépendance, prélude à une révolution lourde de conséquences pour Dublin. De ce côté du pont O'Connell, le long du Liffey River, s'élève le Custom House, une des plus belles constructions de la ville, de style georgianien, gravement endommagée lors des troubles de 1921 *et restaurée, depuis, dans son ancienne splendeur*. Le regard de O'Connell va jusqu'à la Bank of Ireland et au Trinity College d'où sont sortis nombre de grands savants, hommes politiques et écrivains, notamment le philosophe George Berkeley et le poète satirique Jonathan Swift. La bibliothèque de l'Université abrite l'héritage le plus célèbre de l'Irlande celtique, le Book of Kells, d'une inestimable valeur *et aux somptueuses enluminures*.

IRISH
MANE
BURTON
Mothers Pride
MURPHY
Something to look forward to
MURPHY
Something to look forward to



THE DISTANT DUBLINER: JAMES JOYCE

It is well known that the Irish have always had a way with words, as though, in revenge, they had appropriated the language that was once forced upon them and adapted it for their own subtle purposes. Proof is a disproportionate number of gifted talkers, wits, conversationalists, parliamentarians, barristers, actors and playwrights – to say nothing of story-tellers. A visitor from a country where eloquence is neither practised nor particularly appreciated may well be impressed by the fact that the art of the well-turned phrase is not limited to any one social level; it can still be enjoyed in any Irish pub living up to its reputation. He may also be disheartened by the sheer waste of it: for so much more seems to be going on at any given time than can be understood and consumed on the premises. But then there was James Joyce, a Dubliner, not perhaps much of a talker himself, but someone who listened and remembered it and made it last for a lifetime of prose works.

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James Joyce (1882–1941), whose external biography is a string of four cities – Dublin, Trieste, Zurich and Paris – wrote only about the first of them, the one he knew best and cared about, though he left it in 1904 and, after a last visit in 1912, never returned. It contained enough material and memories for the devoted, single-minded work of a lifetime.

At times Joyce liked to boast there was nothing that he could not do with language, and he was right up to a point, but actually he was shrewd enough to avoid almost anything he was not good at (say, writing thrillers or historical novels or love scenes). He concentrated on what he knew best, leaving out exotic or unfamiliar walks of life. Above all he could capture the actual nuances and cadences and mannerisms of real people talking in Dublin, especially a section of the lower middle classes. And as often as he could get away with it, he used the set-up of a few men gathered in an enclosed space in order to talk and, if possible, to drink. These were men almost exclusively: according to custom, women's place was at home.

With an ear almost unmatched even among Irish writers, Joyce seems to record the way the men express themselves, confidently or timidly, with commonplaces, formulas, bold assertions, glib assurance or halting phrases. He notices the way conversations develop, move from topic tc topic, are steered, monopolized or disrupted. Small talk can easily turn to gossip and reminiscing, speculation and political grievances, may become play-acting and degenerate into argument; it may reflect practically all concerns under the sun; nothing need be kept out of it. And men, whatever axe they may want to grind, always reveal mainly themselves by the words they use, their ambitions, prejudices and apprehensions. When people converse, and even more so when talk becomes the main entertainment, story-telling may turn into a stage performance: you change your voice and begin to impersonate, you quote what you have heard and may drop into mimicry and parody, you make subtle hints that are picked up by an audience that shares your own background. And this is all fair game for Joyce and gives him the rudiments of the multiple metamorphoses in his elaborate, sometimes obscure later work, in which, however, individual voices can still be discerned.

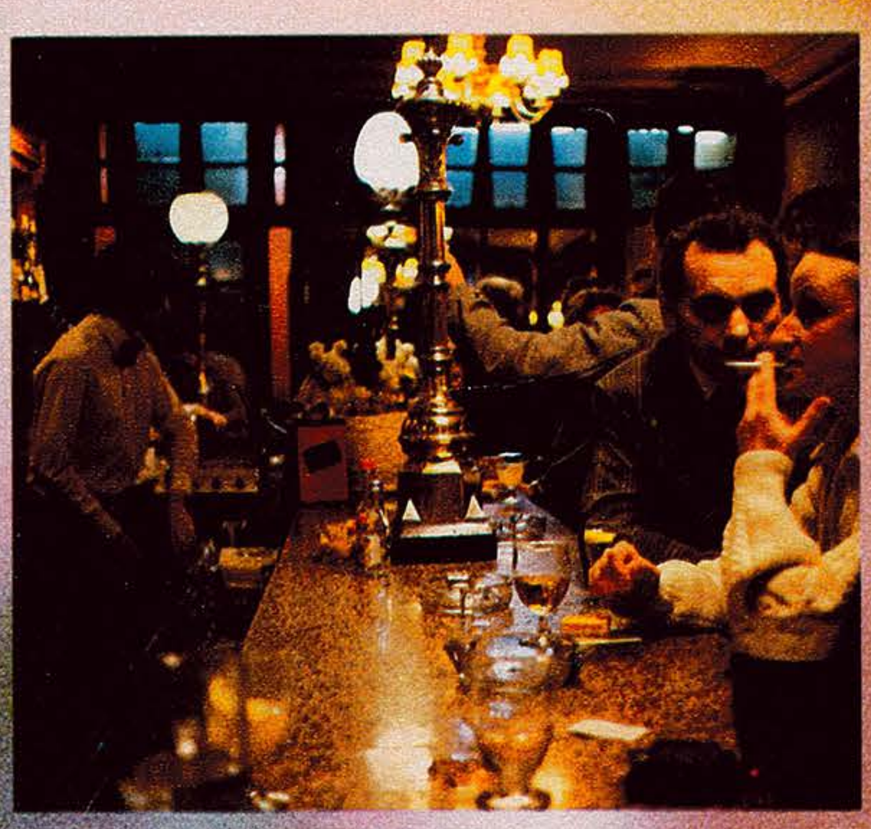
Speech, Thought and Reality

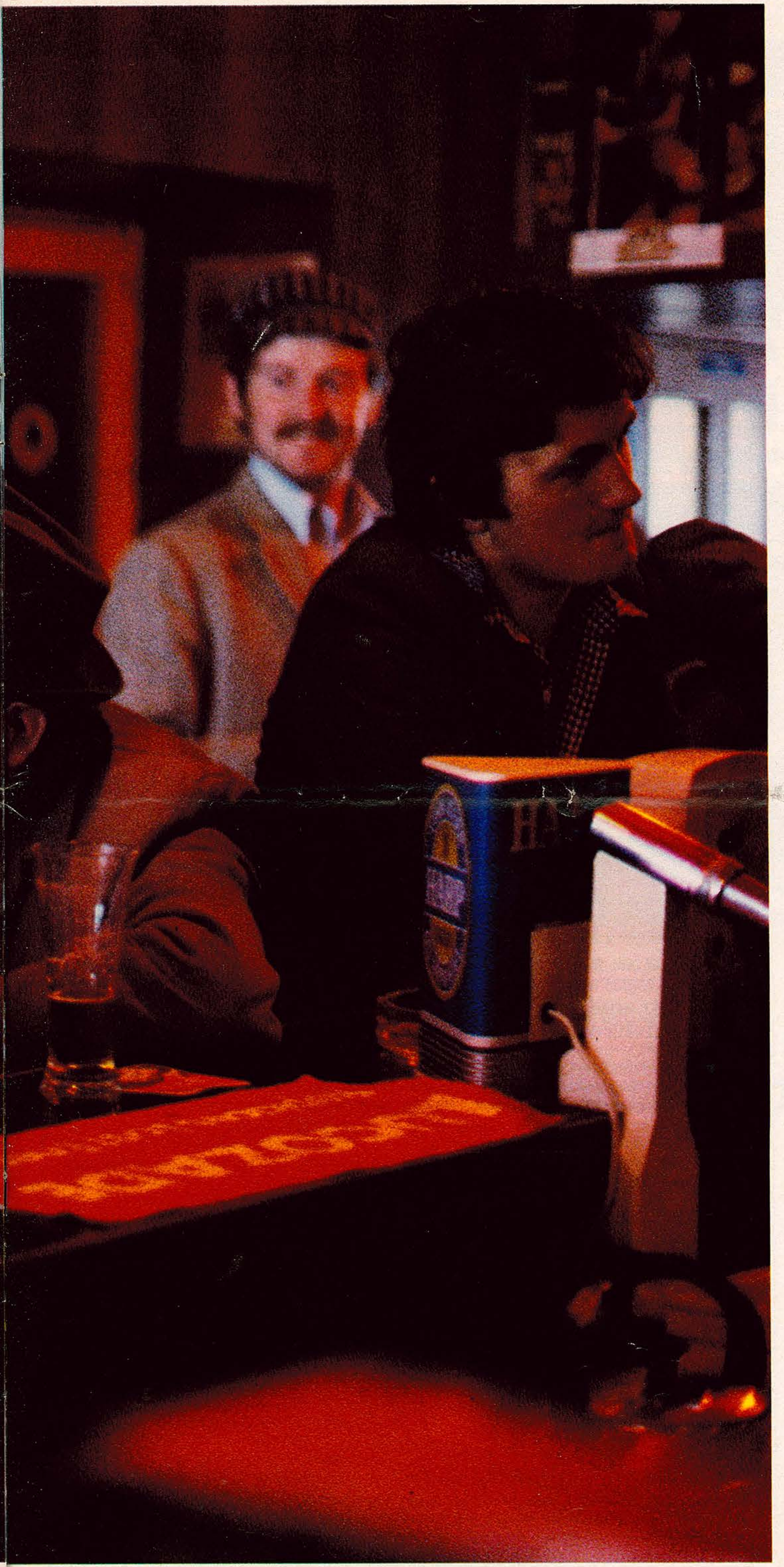
People in public talking to others, informing, persuading, confusing, entertaining, manipulating, boring, helping, misleading, impressing their listeners is one side, the extrovert one, of a picture whose reverse is the isolated, often afraid, not understood, aspiring, alienated human being, alone with his thoughts (and even in dialogue one's thoughts form an unbroken succession alongside what we choose to say aloud). Literature has always rendered thought and has always needed some conventionalized form. Joyce worked on this too and perfected methods that might suggest, or even simulate as far as words are able to do, those elusive processes going on in the mind which are not verbal or only partly verbal but somehow interdependent with language. For their notation on the page Joyce developed a more and more subtle medium with correspondingly less adherence to logic, order and neat grammatical rules. The traditional narrative devices had not been able and had not even tried to expose the privacy of anyone's mind in all its random connections of the moment. Joyce's "stream of consciousness" technique, as it came to be called, managed to convey an illusion of the jumpy, erratic nature of associations even though its presentation through language is inevitably an artifice, a deception.

The mind of course does not have to explain to itself what it is that it is thinking; but for the reader, who becomes an uninvited intruder, there may be difficulties in relating the character's fragmentary ideas to his other circumstances, and Joyce as author tends not to supply footnotes. But fortunately for the reader, thoughts too are partly related to the world outside which the senses report about, and this is the external but highly specific world of Dublin at the turn of the century, with its streets, shops, gulls, trams, smells and noises. The city is not really described, but experienced as by an inhabitant, not by description, but by impinging impressions, and this so distinctly that memories of a visit to the city may well merge inextricably with memories of mere reading. And Joyce wrote fiction that is eminently walkable. You can turn round a corner from Dorset Street into Eccles Street, for example, and look at a public house which, decades ago, was operated by Mr. Lawrence O'Rourke, both in Dublin actuality and in a novel called *Ulysses* (and you may even, to this day, get a kick out of seeing the initials LOR still in the glass of the window pane), and you can then stop at whatever remains of a house No. 7 in Eccles Street, which is not much – a bit of a front wall and the area railing. And it makes sense to say that some 76 years ago, late at night at 2 a.m. on June 17, Leopold Bloom, resident of the house, climbed over the railing and dropped into the area to enter his house through the pantry, having forgotten his front door key. You can touch the area railing and still see where the door once was (it is now in the Bailey Restaurant as a tourist attraction), and you may estimate whether you would risk the jump below – but the man who performed the feat never existed at all. His existence is merely a matter of words that someone thought up. Joyce makes that kind of philological tourism possible; what it proves is perhaps nothing else but the uncanny power of words, the words in a book which can send us on a round of literary detection, and, mind you, enough of us to affect the tourism of a country which already has so much to offer by way of real sights, historical and natural, and *real* people.

Why should certain words, put in some carefully chosen order, have this particular power? This potency to interest us in the doings of some entirely synthetic characters, and to keep us interested and excited over the trivial events in some parochial corner of Eu- ▶▶

Fritz Senn works as a copy editor in Zurich; amateur Joyce scholar and occasional visiting professor in the USA; has written widely on Joyce, is currently president of the James Joyce Foundation and connected with Joyce Symposiums in Dublin and Zurich.





The pub is one of the chief centres of Irish social life, for it provides a setting in which drinks and conversation can be perfectly blended. And there is certainly no shortage of pubs. In James Joyce's *Ulysses* Stephen Dedalus muses how difficult it is to get from one end of Dublin to the other without passing a pub, and the situation has not changed much in the meantime. Stout, mostly made in the Guinness brewery nearby, is drunk here on long evenings in quantities ranging from 5 to 20 tankards. In the subdued blue light of Art Nouveau lamps, beside marble counters or heavy wooden tables, the events of the day are spiritedly converted into yarns and tales. But Irish pubs are not the preserve of townsfolk. Ale-houses and taverns line the streets of even the smallest country town. The sociable atmosphere is the same everywhere, for a pub is a place where you talk to your neighbour, of whatever provenance. That usually doesn't take long, and the stranger is soon surrounded by friends who, to judge by their behaviour and the warmth of their acceptance, might well have known him for years.

Der Pub ist eine der Hauptquellen irischer Geselligkeit, denn er bietet den Rahmen, in dem sich Gespräch und Trinken auf unübertroffene Weise vereinen. Die Pubs sind denn auch überaus zahlreich. In James Joyce's «Ulysses» überlegt Stephen Dedalus, wie schwierig es ist, von der einen Seite von Dublin zur andern zu gelangen, ohne an einem Pub vorbeizukommen, und das ist auch heute kaum anders. «Guinness» Stout, das Dunkelbier, verträgt sich hier an langen Abenden in Quanten von 5 bis 20 Mass. Im gedämpften Blaulicht der Jugendstillampen, an Marmortheken und wuchtige Holztische gelehnt, wird hier das Tagesgeschehen bereitwillig in Geschichten verpackt. Die Pubs sind jedoch in Irland kein Reservat der Städter. Ale houses und Taverns schmücken reihenweise die Strassen auch kleinster Marktflecken. Der gesellige Ton ist jedoch überall der gleiche. Denn im Pub will man mit dem andern ins Gespräch kommen. Das geschieht meist schnell, und man ist bald von Freunden umgeben, die, nach Verhalten und Herzlichkeit zu schliessen, einen offensichtlich schon lange kennen.

Le «pub» est l'un des moyens les mieux prisés des Irlandais pour cultiver la vie sociable, car il offre l'occasion rêvée de combiner le plaisir de boire et celui de converser. Aussi les pubs sont-ils en nombre élevé. Dans l'*Ulysse* de James Joyce, Stephen Dedalus raconte à quel point il est difficile d'aller d'un coin à l'autre de Dublin sans passer devant un pub. Aujourd'hui, cela n'a pas changé. «Guinness» Stout est une bière brune qui, ici, se consomme, au cours d'une longue soirée, à raison de 5 à 20 chopes. Dans un éclairage voilé et bleuâtre, distribué par des lampes style 1900 fixées à des chevrons de marbre et à des tables de bois massif, on donne une forme complaisante aux événements du jour qui deviennent des récits historiques. Cependant, les pubs ne sont pas, en Irlande, une exclusivité des citadins. Des «Ale houses» et des «Taverns» bordent les rues des plus petits bourgs. Il n'empêche que, partout, on retrouve le même ton sociable. Ce que les clients des pubs recherchent, c'est d'entrer en conversation avec les autres, ce qui, en général, ne tarde jamais. Vite l'on est entouré d'amis comme de toujours.

rope, experiencing in these characters and events and places something far beyond what they are in their fake realistic setting? It remains a mystery. It cannot be explained by reference to the locality, fascinating as the locality may be, or by invoking the Irish gift for fabulation alone. Some archetypal chords seem to be touched, which is not an explanation but simply a paraphrase of something we cannot account for in art. It has something to do, however, with a reverence for language, with a sense that words are not simply the exchangeable currency of daily intercourse, but something to taste, to savour, to judge, something worth close attention.

Rapid Transformations

It is poets who pay attention to words, and in poetry words get looked at more closely. Joyce indeed began his career of writing (about which he had few doubts) by fumbling with conventional verse, quaint, melodious and imitative. He realized that others could do that better and took note of what happened around him, jotting down sketches that were both commonplace and yet meant to be illuminating. They grew into short stories which showed ordinary Dublin destinies, often at some quiet turning-point or moment of bitter awareness of some limitation. The plight of the individual is mirrored, and also conditioned, by the environment, by society, the family, the State (British or nationally Irish), the Church; the title of the collection of short stories, *Dubliners,* brings community and individual together and already circumscribes Joyce's persistent interest. Today the stories are as vigorous as ever, as comic and as depressive as living itself.

How an observant and vulnerable boy grows up in such surroundings and somehow survives the temptations of conformity is the theme of the first novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* the growth of Stephen Dedalus, who shares some experience and some early attitudes with his author. It shows how you learn, or are made to learn, choose, adapt, avoid and try out the roles that society holds ready for you, and how you substitute some of your own liking, and how you outgrow those as well until you find what you think is your destiny and are willing to take the risk – the goal may or may not be reached at some future stage, but the process itself is presented with brisk changes of pace, mood or understanding, according to the degree of insight that has been gained. In this novel of development readers of either sex and any age and of entirely different backgrounds have discovered their own intimate tribulations of adolescence with similar painful defeats and precarious triumphs.

There was one story, orginally meant for inclusion in *Dubliners* but put aside, which in gestation got out of hand: it increased in size and scope and everything and became much more than a short story and even a novel: a reflection of, and a mythology for, the twentieth century, and one of its foremost intellectual toys. The result, after years of writing and rewriting and revision and accumulation and expansion, was *Ulysses,* that disquieting novel, if novel it still is, which was ready just in time for Joyce's fortieth birthday, on February 2, 1922. It shocked the cultural world quite a bit, and primarily for the wrong reason, for one of its least remarkable features (nowadays hardly remarkable at all), its lack of sexual reticence: that, the breaking of a taboo, was merely a job which needed doing badly at the time, and would have been done before long anyway.

To talk about *Ulysses* is as satisfactory as describing last night's banquet: characterization, even if it were possible, would not tell you anything about its feel, taste or exuberance. The book still deals with people as ordinary as those in *Dubliners,* and with the city. In fact the name *Ulysses* almost automatically brings to mind Dublin, so much so that Dubliners are justified in claiming, when confronting inspectors of doors or climbers of area railings, that their city exists in its own concrete right and would have done so without Joyce. And there may be some truth in that. But if Dublin is not just the setting for a book, the book also far exceeds its setting, it is also the least confined of all novels so far, it seems to summarize whatever has been thought and written before, in Ireland and elsewhere, it translates classical and Christian myths and abbreviates history; it flaunts and mocks the conventions of literature and celebrates them at the same time. It is the most accurate and specific imitation of outside "reality" and a major challenge to the very notion of reality. It is a novel that can perhaps be described by contradictions alone. It is a book about which we are invited to disagree. And a novel which reveals itself as one of the saddest and funniest ever, getting funnier every time you read it anew.

Ulysses was instantly banned in all English-speaking countries except Ireland (where a ban was unnecessary), and Joyce turned from an unknown Irishman in exile into a figure of the international avant-garde. He was claimed for artistic creeds of various stridency. But he remained relatively unaffected by the activities going on around him in Paris (where, in the twenties, a whole important chapter of American literature was being written, practically on his doorstep) and continued a fairly bourgeois life style, caring for his family, with failing eyesight, never quite free from money troubles in spite of generous donations, working slowly, and against the demurs of many former admirers, on a book of even more extravagant unruliness. It came out in 1939, after years of labour, as *Finnegans Wake* (the title reminiscent of, but not quite identical with, an Irish ballad), at the most inopportune time, when the world was affected by Hitler's aggression.

Like many others surprised by the war, Joyce was on the run again and found a belated refuge, in the teeth of a prohibitive immigration policy, in Zurich, where he died on January 13, 1941. His grave is in the Fluntern cemetery. He left behind a small number of books, two slender volumes of verse, one play, *Exiles,* which was considered lifeless until Harold Pinter in London resuscitated it with success, and the four prose works on which his reputation will rest. They have kept commentators and critics busy for more than half a century already and will continue to do so for a long time to come; nobody could keep track of all the theses, books, articles, conferences, films and stage versions. The efforts of Joyce scholars, not always conducted with benevolent modesty, have clarified much but also helped to increase, in the popular notion, the supposed difficulty and inaccessibility of Joyce's works and so perhaps debarred readers from delights of incredible diversity. The delights are those of good stories, and Irish good stories at that, but also of attempts to order or make sense of the chaos of experience.

The Challenge

If you like to explore and have a minimum of patience, you should be ready for the enterprise. What Homer said of Odysseus – that he saw the cities of many men and knew their thoughts (Odyssey I, 4) – can be applied

▶▶

In Barney Kiernan's Bar – an excerpt from Ulysses

So we turned into Barney Kiernan's and there sure enough was the citizen up in the corner having a great confab with himself and that bloody mangy mongrel, Garryowen, and he waiting for what the sky would drop in the way of drink.

– There he is, says I, in his gloryhole, with his cruiskeen lawn and his load of papers, working for the cause.

The bloody mongrel let a grouse out of him would give you the creeps. Be a corporal work of mercy if someone would take the life of that bloody dog. I'm told for a fact he ate a good part of the breeches off a constabulary man in Santry that came round one time with a blue paper about a licence.

– Stand and deliver, says he.

– That's all right, citizen, says Joe. Friends here.

– Pass, friends, says he.

Then he rubs his hand in his eye and says he:

– What's your opinion of the times?

Doing the rapparee and Rory of the hill. But, begob, Joe was equal to the occasion.

– I think the markets are on a rise, says he, sliding his hand down his fork.

So begob the citizen claps his paw on his knee and he says:

– Foreign wars is the cause of it.

And says Joe, sticking his thumb in his pocket:

– It's the Russians wish to tyrannise.

– Arrah, give over your bloody codding, Joe, says I, I've a thirst on me I wouldn't sell for half a crown.

– Give it a name, citizen, says Joe.

– Wine of the country, says he.

– What's yours? says Joe.

– Ditto MacAnaspey, says I.

– Three pints, Terry, says Joe. And how's the old heart, citizen? says he.

– Never better, a chara, says he. What Garry? Are we going to win? Eh?

And with that he took the bloody old towser by the scruff of the neck and, by Jesus, he near throttled him.

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here: we learn a lot about life in a modern city and through it in many others, and quite a bit about human thinking.

The Joyce of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* offers you more at any one instant than your mind can hold – more even, it turns out, than it can muster in subsequent attempts. According to your interests and what you already know, you may be struck by different facets. Readers who are not familiar with Ireland make up for the handicap by noticing perhaps more the behaviour of the characters, or maybe the sociological survey (as we would now call it), or Joyce's psychological insights, or how he deals all the time with the human condition and its hazards. And we may be alert for cultural overtones, echoes of things we have read or forgotten. If we are tempted, we may try to find out why and how a versatile commercial traveller should be modelled on a mythological hero. And we can of course just listen to the rhythm and the sound and the craftsmanship, and enjoy it.

Or you may just take it all to be an adventure, if you allow adventure to mean something beyond the externals of war, murder or seduction (though all these, naturally, are reflected somehow in the works too), if adventure comprises the willingness to face unexpected turns of any kind. So perhaps the most basic experience of confronting printed letters performing on the page is that you never know what will come next. Which is precisely what upset early readers so much. The game of story-telling seemed to be played according to unknown rules that were never stated. The characters' curiosity, for one, could take you almost anywhere without warning, and the author, in what he chose to reveal and in how he revealed it, had new surprises up his sleeve, often abrupt ones, and didn't appear to care whether you could follow or not (as a matter of fact he cared a great deal, supplying unmarked hints all over the place). As you proceed in *Ulysses,* there is no telling what the next step will feel like (while, at the same time, the business of one urban day is being transacted). The action, such as it is, looks perhaps unexciting enough, without sensational events, but once you think you are getting used to the way the story unfolds, things begin to change. At times you feel everything is between invisible quotation marks; then you seem to be reading a newspaper, then you are in a play (though it would be impossible to stage it), then you read a succession of questions and answers of doubtful applicability, or an amorphous mass of thought; there are translations into historical styles and any number of sudden transitions. In *Finnegans Wake* you can't even predict how any sentence is going to behave.

Something for every taste, in short, and never too much of anything for too long. But it's an odd comment on human nature that such diversity is not always taken to be, basically, an enrichment, but is felt to be a breach of contract, even an insult. So Joyce's books, beyond the continuous pleasure they afford, are excellent training for mental flexibility, an antidote against dogmatic rigour.

Finnegans Wake, a book in which parallels and extremes meet, has given up all pretence of unassailable truth, or that one particular view may be privileged over all others. Uncertainty is built into the language itself, which therefore appears obscure, scintillating, decomposed, hybrid, faulty. Sometimes we can still reconstruct what the sentence might be if it were "correct" (the point being of course that it isn't): in "And a hungried thousand of the unemancipated slaved the way", we may substitute, without qualms, the number "hundred" and the phrase "paved the way" for the deviations. But we immediately see how in fact the work of civilization was often carried out by slaves, with hunger as a motive force, so the deviations have their own, somewhat divergent, story to add, like an uneasy conscience. Or look at a term which came under heavy fire many years after Joyce gave it the expressive spelling "awethorrorty". Once your eyes get adjusted, you may admit that authority was often coupled with awe and horrors (and you may be reminded that gods were often evoked for the cause, like Thor, the irate god of thunder). What you make of the ingredients that you gradually extract from the no longer authoritarian language is up to you; the point here is only that disturbances are integrated into the words themselves; and if there is anything which is characteristic even of the reality around us, then surely it is disturbances and defects and contradictions.

Disturbances can be acoustic. "We dinned unnerstunned why you sassad..." Here obviously someone is saying that we didn't understand what was said (or is it "why you're so sad"?), with a bit of a stammer, and we hear that some noise has interfered (din) so that we're stunned and not as smart as we might be...

"Drouth is stronger than faction." That is easy enough, and even English, to the effect that drought, leading to thirst, and remedies against it, may overcome disagreement or fighting, at least temporarily: we may not see eye to eye, but let's have a drink together! (This might happen in any pub, Irish or not.) But surely you have also been affected by an entirely different version, discernible below the surface: Truth is stranger than fiction; and so we may pit fiction against facts, and bibulous harmony against factitious struggle, and thoughts against opinions, and before long we have so many contrasts to bounce off against each other that we may realize that such, perhaps, is the only sort of truth available – a choreography of possibilities. ●

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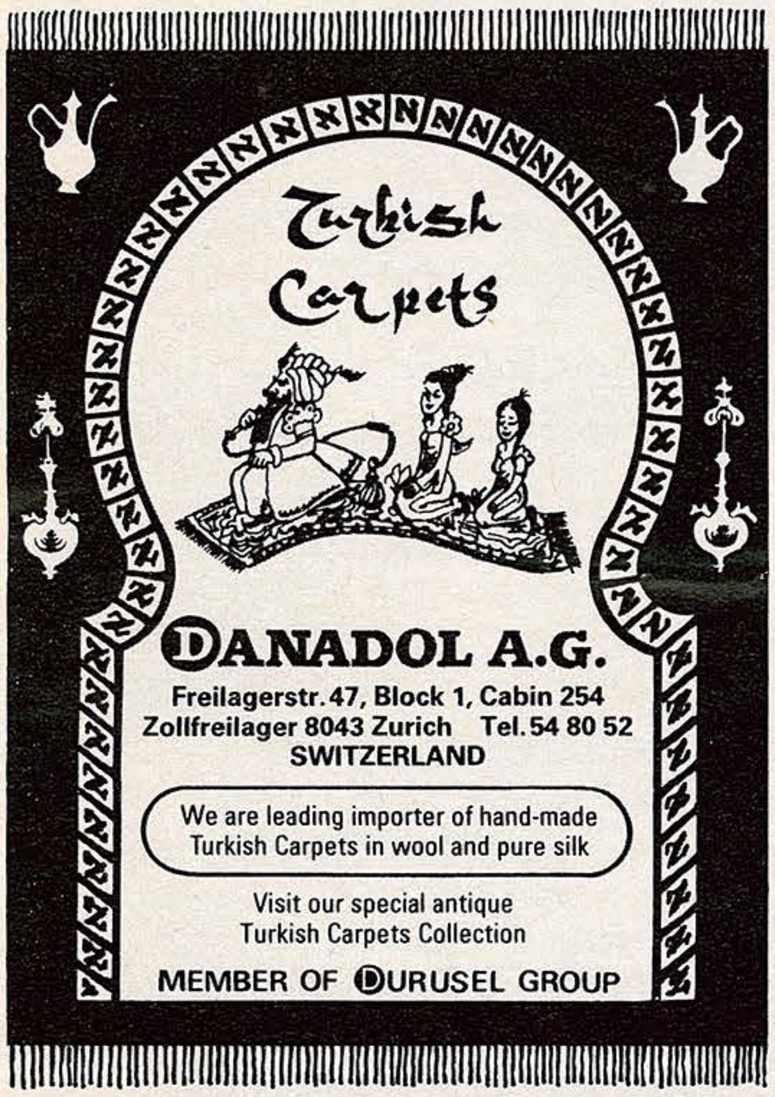
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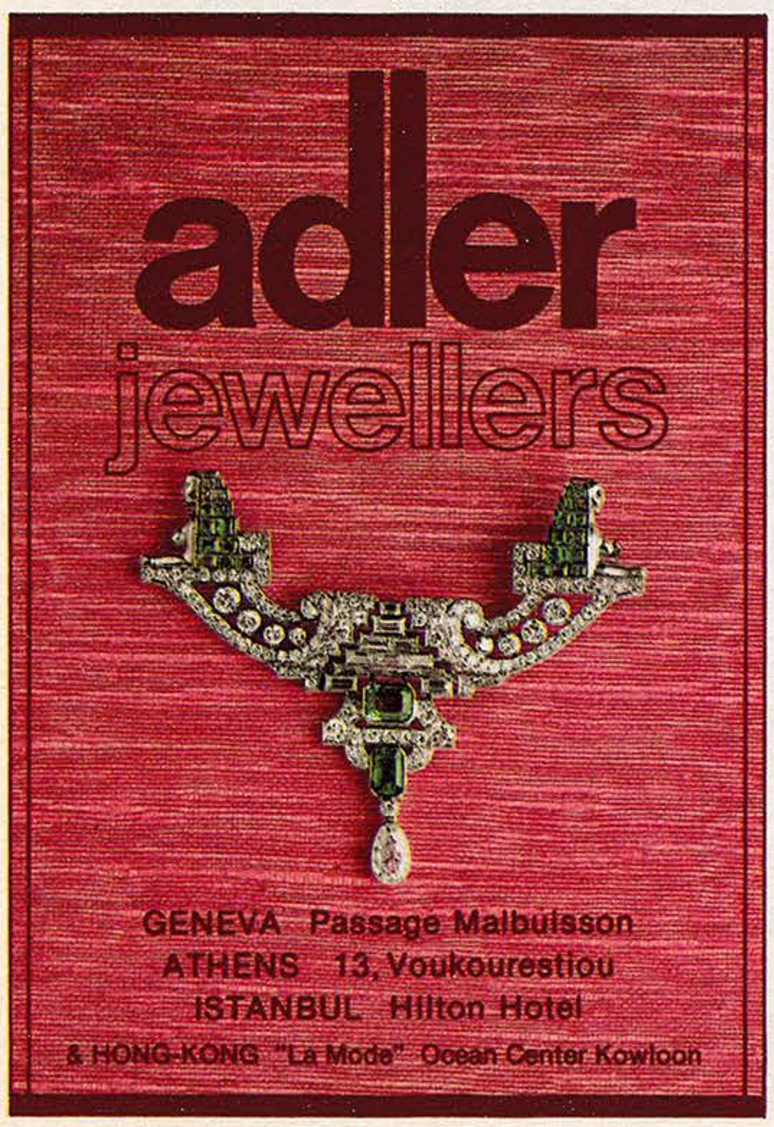

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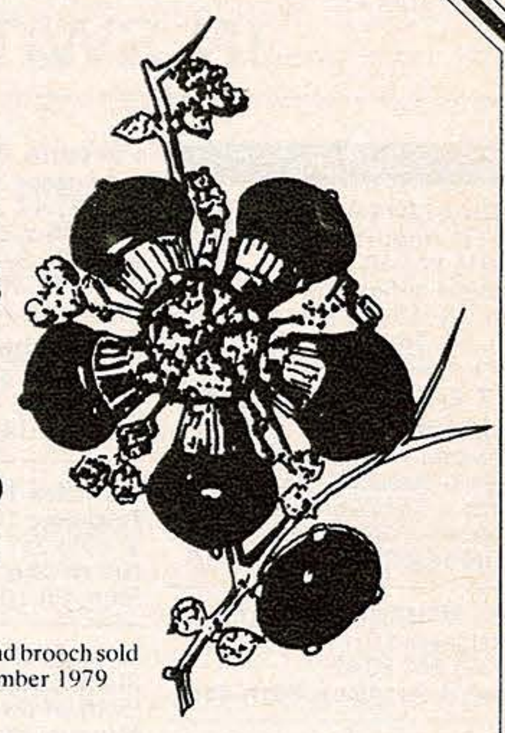

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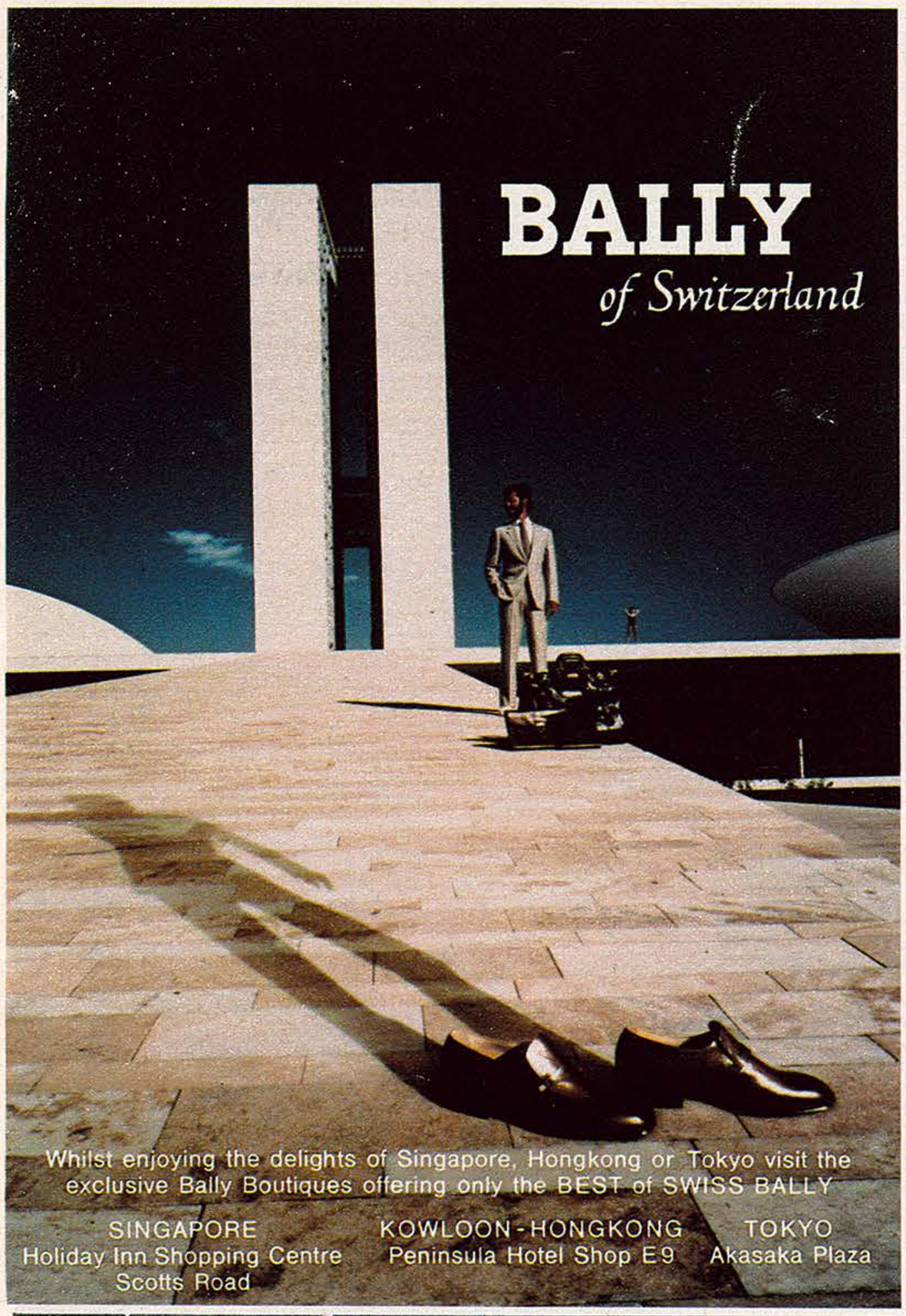
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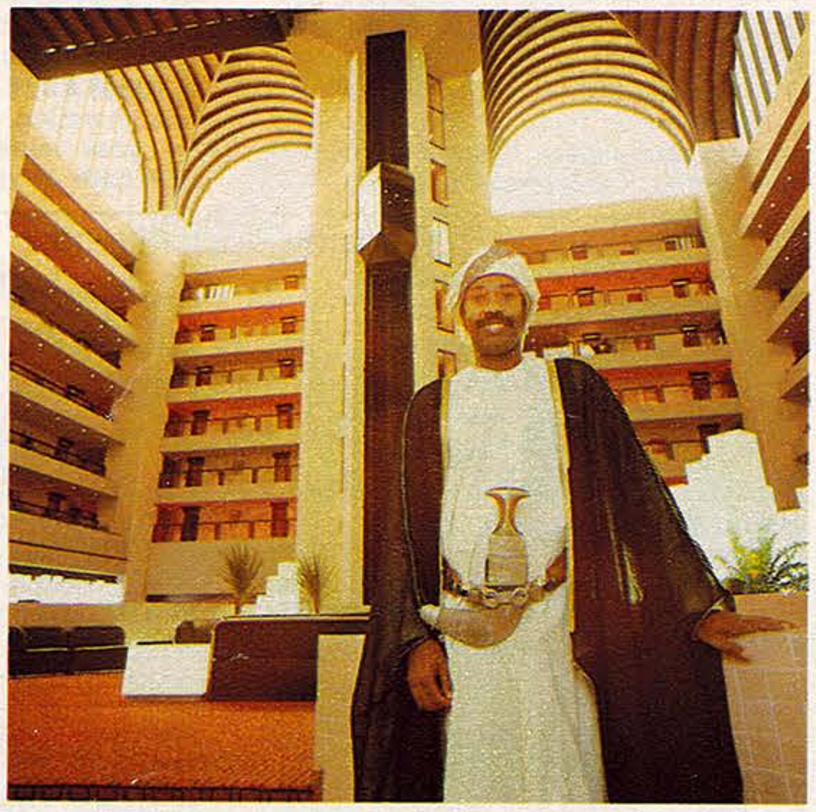

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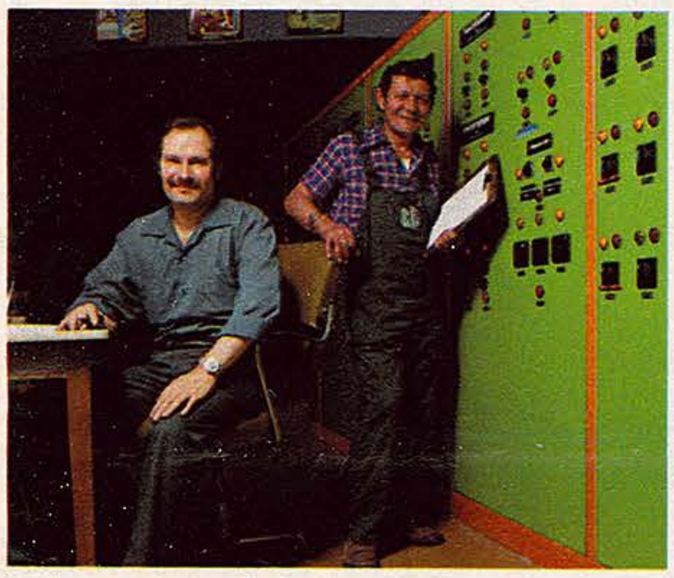

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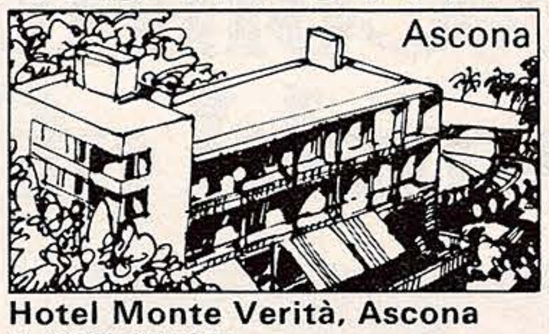

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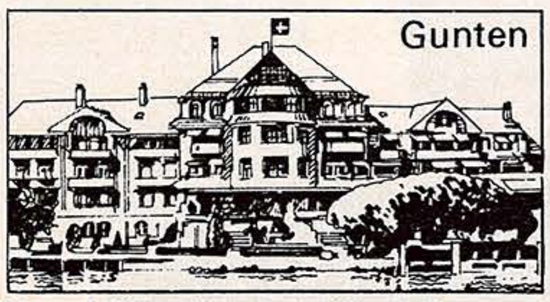

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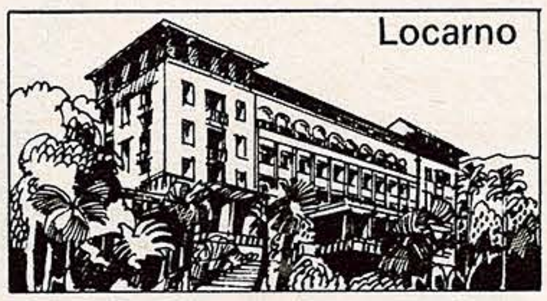

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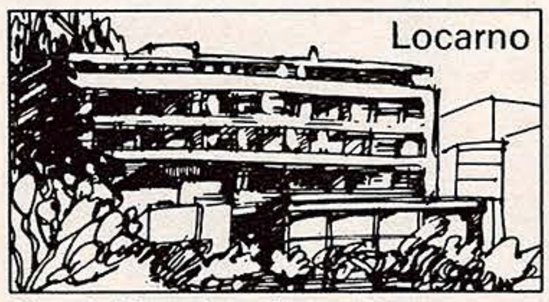

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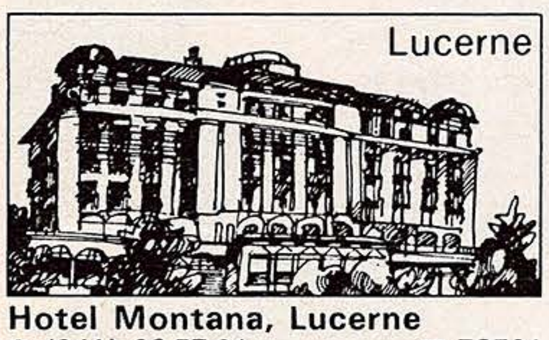

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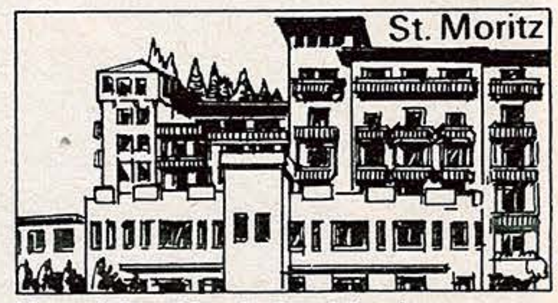

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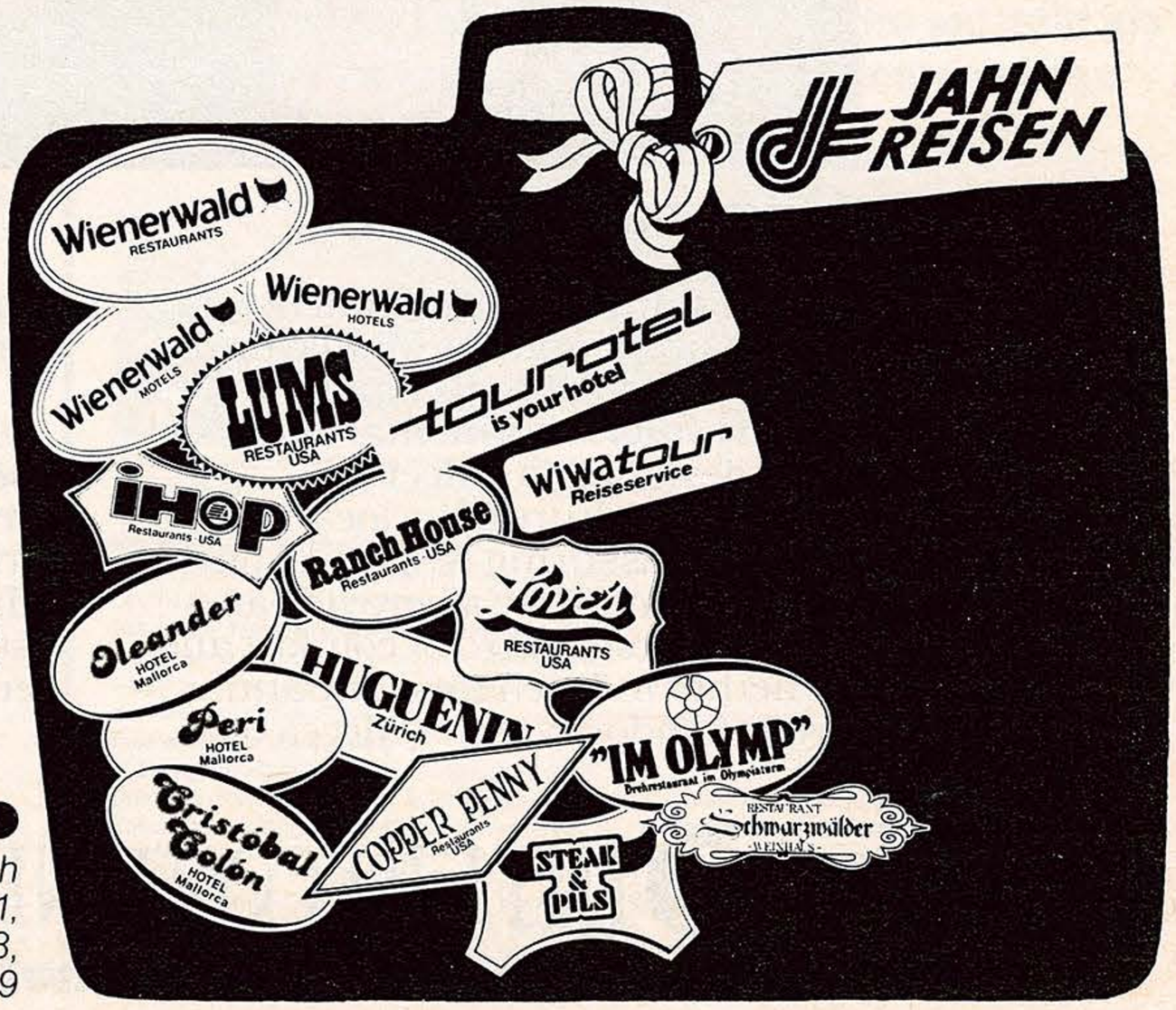

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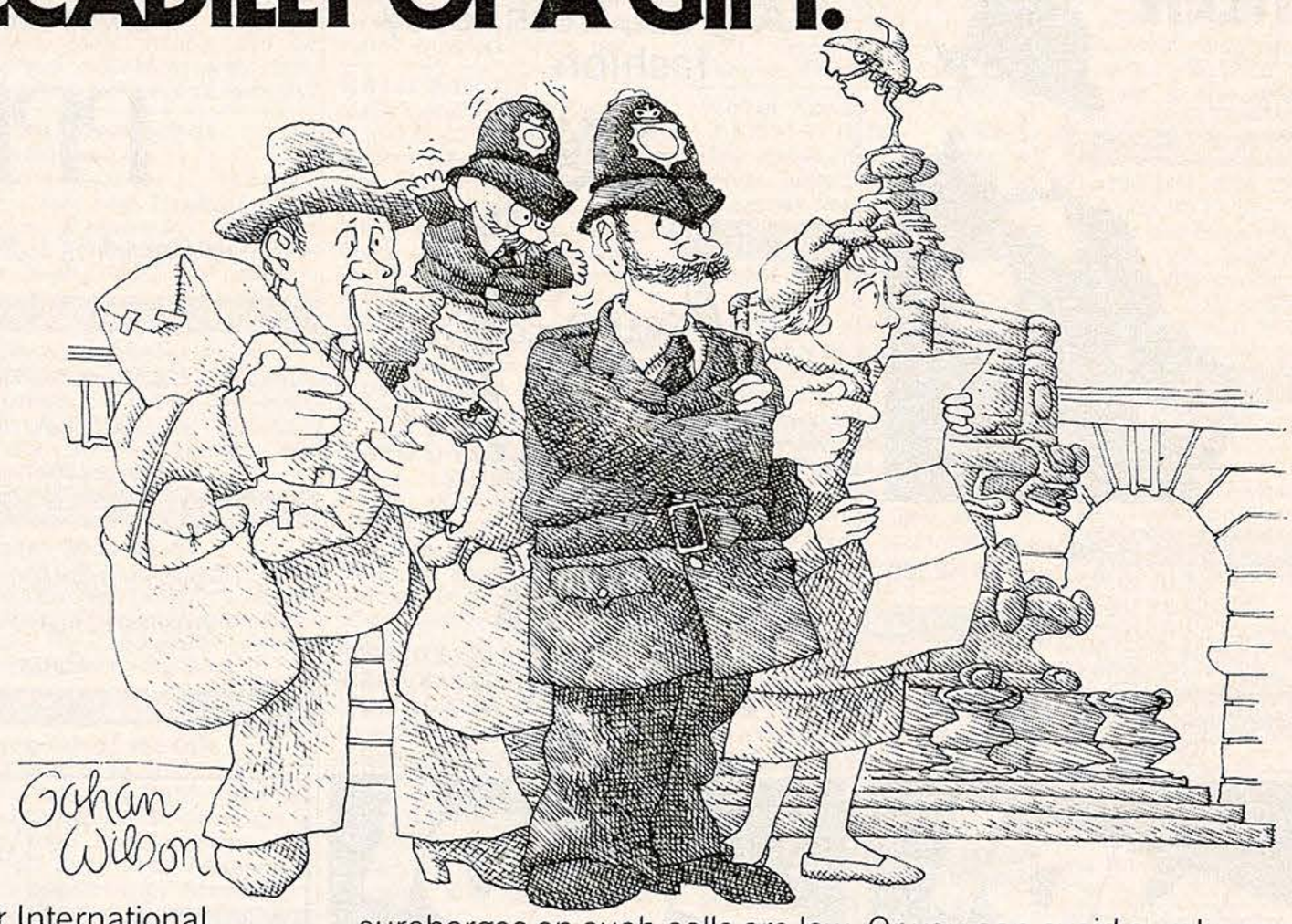

Wherever your travels take you, phone the folks back home and tell them about your trip. Like how you felt so British when you wandered through Piccadilly Circus, buying all sorts of London mementoes. And a call to the States will cost less than you think, especially if you follow these pound-saving tips.

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OTHER WAYS TO SAVE Many countries accept Telephone Company credit cards and collect calls. And where they do, the hotel surcharges on such calls are low. Or you can avoid surcharges altogether by calling from the post office or from other telephone centers.

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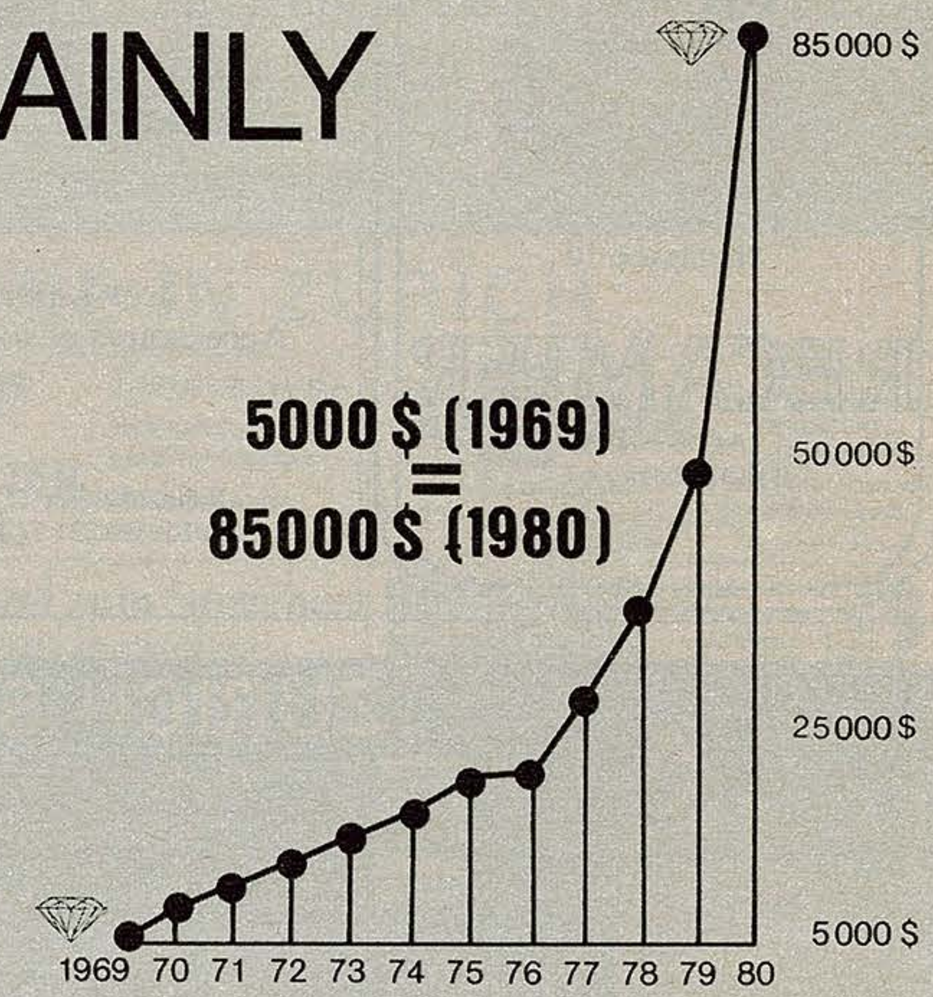

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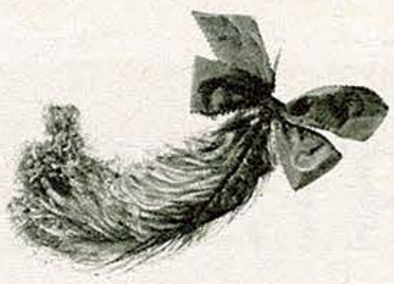

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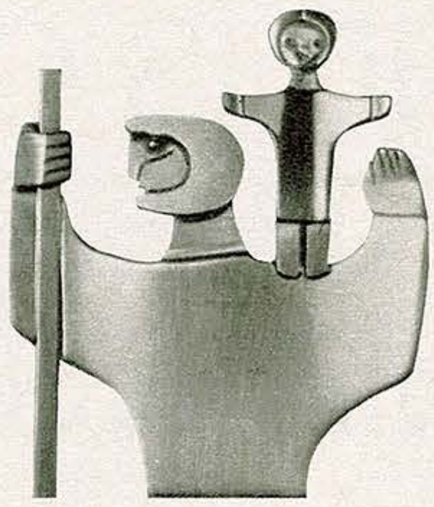

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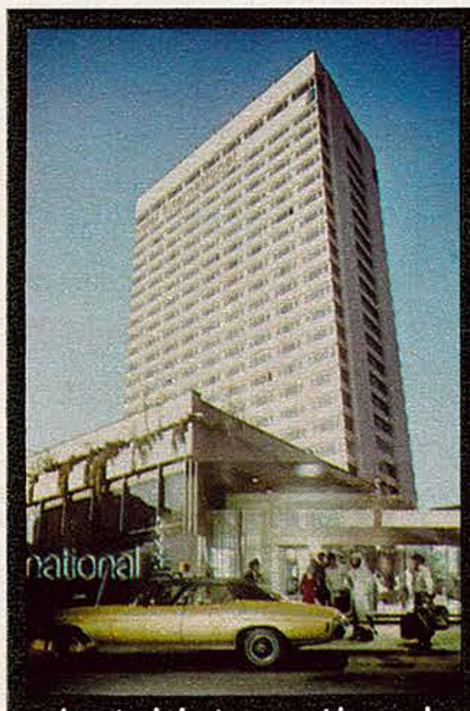

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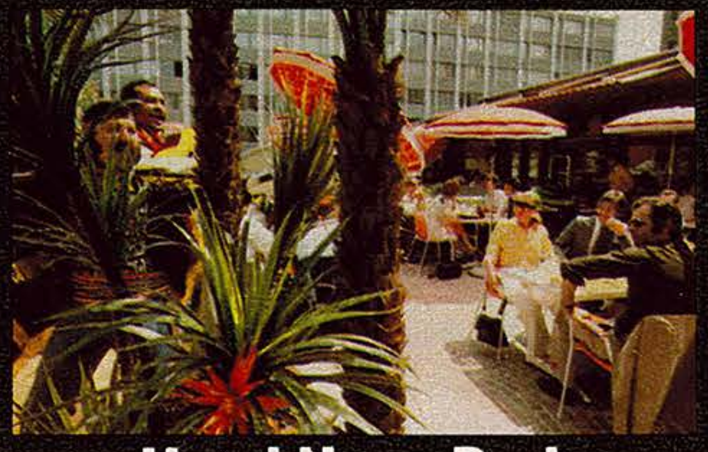

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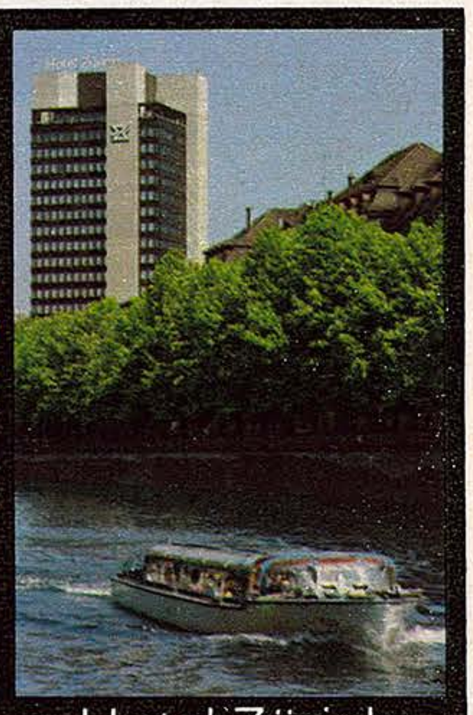

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Hotel Schweizerhof **
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